

THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #163, April 6 – April 26, 2011
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

THE CASE AGAINST THE MIDDLE CLASS

ARUN GUPTA
PAGE 5

FRANKREYNOSO.COM

NO NUKES
P10

HAITI'S FUTURE
P12

CANNED
ECONOMY
P4



THE INDYDEPENDENT

THE INDYDEPENDENT, INC.
666 BROADWAY, SUITE 500
NEW YORK, NY 10012

PHONE: 212-904-1282

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ellen Davidson, Anna Gold, John Tarleton

GENERAL MANAGER:

Arun Gupta

EDITOR/COORDINATOR:

Elizabeth Henderson

ILLUSTRATIONS COORDINATOR:

Frank Reynoso

DESIGNERS:

Steven Arenrich, Ryan Dunsmuir, Anna Gold,
Mikael Tarkela

INTERN:

Lindsey Catherine Cornum

GENERAL INQUIRIES:

contact@indypendent.org

SUBMISSIONS AND NEWS TIPS:

submissions@indypendent.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS:

indypendent.org/donate

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION:

ads@indypendent.org

READER COMMENTS:

letters@indypendent.org

VOLUNTEER:

volunteer@indypendent.org

INDYKIDS:

info@indykids.org

The Indypendent is a New York-based free newspaper published 16 times a year on Wednesdays for our print and online readership of more than 200,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 650 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Indypendent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Indypendent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

The Indypendent is affiliated with the New York City Independent Media Center, which is part of the global Indymedia movement, an international network dedicated to fostering grassroots media production, and with *IndyKids*, a children's newspaper. NYC IMC is an open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org).

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS:

Sam Alcott, Bennett Baumer, Marlena Buezek, Donna Davey, Ellen Davidson, Erika Eichelberger, Renée Feltz, Daniel Fishel, Seth Fisher, Sophie Forbes, Leo Garcia, Christine Hale, Mary Annaise Heglar, Irina Ivanova, Dondi J, Alex Kane, Julie Laquer, Gary Martin, John McDonald, Mac McGill, Michael Nelson, Mike Newton, Mike Niemiec, Jaisal Noor, Jessica Patrick, Sophie Ragsdale, Ann Schneider, Andrew Stern, Gabriella Szpunt, John Tarleton, Donya Todd, Lucy Valkyrie, Steven Wishnia and Amy Wolf.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER, AND FOLLOW OUR BLOGGERS EVERY DAY AT INDYDEPENDENT.ORG!

community calendar

PLEASE SEND EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS TO INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

WED APRIL 13

4-6pm • Free

PANEL: A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK: THE LIVING WAGE MOVEMENT AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE. Join activists and academics for a panel discussion on the history and future of the living wage movement, including the current work of The Living Wage Campaign NYC in calling for the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act.
Fordham Law School, 140 W 62nd St
212-636-6000 • law.fordham.edu

7pm • Free

TALK: IS EMANCIPATORY COMMUNISM POSSIBLE?. Alan Armstrong, co-editor of the journal *Emancipation & Liberation*, will present his argument for a new emancipatory communism. He'll examine the failures of Communism in the past and discuss new methods of breaking with capitalist production relations.
TRS, Inc, 44 E 32nd St
888-579-2245 • marxisthumanistinitiative.org

THU APRIL 14

2:30-5pm • Free

2011 COMMUNITY FORUM ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. Join the New York Asian Women's Center and the YWCA for a panel discussion, film screening and evening of solidarity with women affected by domestic violence.
YWCA, 42-07 Parsons Blvd, Queens
718-353-4044 • ywcaqueens.org

6-9pm • Free

TALK: *THE CIVIL WARS IN U.S. LABOR*. Hear labor journalist and lawyer Steve Early discuss his latest book on the ongoing internal struggles in the labor movement. The event is co-sponsored by Haymarket Books, Labor Notes, the Center for Worker Education, Working USA and CWA 1101 Rebuilders. Graduate Center for Worker Education, 25 Broadway
212-966-4014 • workereducation.org

FRI APRIL 15

11am-1pm • Free

SOUNDS OF RESISTANCE. Concert and protest against Big Finance with Junkyard Empire and former New York Times war correspondent Chris Hedges. Picket at Bank of America. Union Square
itsoureconomy.us

7:30pm • Free

SCREENING: *THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS*. As part of the ongoing Reel Resistance Film Series, the Freedom Socialist Party will screen the classic 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* and host a discussion after the film. Come early for snacks at 7 pm.
Freedom Hall, 113 W 128th St
212-222-0633 • fsp@nyc

SUN APRIL 17

7pm • Free

SCREENING: *PRIVATE*. Part of the Palestinian Film Festival, this screening features a psychological drama about a Palestinian family whose home becomes a base of operations for

Israeli soldiers.

Judson Memorial Church, 55
Washington Sq S
212-477-0351 • judson.org

7pm • \$10

PERFORMANCE: REV. BILLY AND THE CHURCH OF EARTHALUJAH. Join Rev. Billy and the Church of Life After Shopping Gospel Choir for a performance that is part theater, part church service and entirely against the corporate exploitation of natural resources.
Theatre 80, 80 St Marks Pl
786-247-9584 • revbilly.com

WED APRIL 20

7pm • Free

READING: *INVISIBLE WAR: THE UNITED STATES AND THE IRAQ SANCTIONS*. Joy Gordon will read from her latest book, *Invisible War*, which describes and criticizes U.S. policies in Iraq from 1991 to 2003 that undermined Iraqi infrastructure and paved the way for war. Book signing to follow.
Alwan for the Arts,
16 Beaver St
646-732-3261
alwanforthearts.org

FRI APRIL 22

10am–6pm • Free

CONFERENCE: RACE AND PRIVILEGE IN EDUCATION. Join educators, scholars, activists and students for a day of critical workshops addressing the role of schools in reinforcing racism and economic inequality. The conference seeks to create a space for dialogue and reflection in order to harness the collective power of education to transform harmful structures.
Teachers College, 525 W 120th St
tc.columbia.edu

FRI APRIL 22 – SAT APRIL 23

12–7pm; 11am–4pm • Free

EVENT: EARTHAIR OUTDOORS. A two-day festival of art, music and the environment. A large exhibit area will highlight environmental groups, green businesses and kids' activities that will include educational interactive displays.
Vanderbilt Ave, btwn 42nd and 45th Sts
212-922 - 0048 • earthdayny.org

TUE APRIL 26

7pm • Free

BOOK PARTY: *A SAVING REMNANT*. Join Mandy Carter, Pam McAllister, David McReynolds and Martin Duberman in celebrating the lives of Barbara Deming and David McReynolds, whose roles in pacifist, civil rights, socialist,

APRIL

Critical Thought Series

A Saturday Marxist Seminar

Featuring Stanley Aronowitz, Harriet Fraad Wolff, Michael Pelias and Rick Wolff, cosponsored by the 15th Street Manifesto Group

SATURDAY, APRIL 9

11:00am to 1:00pm
CRITICAL THOUGHT SERIES
8-SESSION CLASS BEGINS
The History of the U.S. Left: From the Civil War to the Soviet 20th Congress, 1956
Stanley Aronowitz

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
CRITICAL THOUGHT SERIES
8-SESSION CLASS BEGINS
History of Materialism
Michael Pelias

3:30 pm - 5:30 pm
CRITICAL THOUGHT SERIES
4-SESSION CLASS BEGINS
Political Economy & the Psychology of Personal Relationships: Lessons from the Great Recession 2008
Harriet Fraad & Rick Wolff

Each Class-
Sliding scale: \$45-\$65
FREE FOR BRECHT FORUM
SUBSCRIBERS

**BUILDING
A MOVEMENT
THAT MOVES**
451 West Street
(btwn Bank and Bethune)

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE:
brechtforum.org
212-242-4201

and gay and lesbian and feminist movements are discussed in Duberman's new book, *A Saving Remnant*. Sponsored by the War Resisters League's Dellinger Lecture on Nonviolence and the New Press.

Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq S
212-477-0351 • judson.org

THU APRIL 28

7pm • \$45

BENEFIT: FAIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY. Support Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting with Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, Michael Moore and Glen Greenwald. Join these distinguished guests in celebrating the work of the national media watchdog group on its 25th anniversary.
Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway
212-864-5400 • symphonyspace.org

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE WEEKLY CALENDAR EMAIL BLASTS AT INDYDEPENDENT.ORG.

.

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYDEPENDENT?

BELOW 14TH ST.

WBAI - 99.5FM
120 Wall St., 10th floor

Bluestockings
172 Allen St.

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

Hudson Park
Branch Library
66 Leroy St.

Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer St.

Whole Earth Bakery
130 St. Marks Place

Brecht Forum
451 West St.

4th Street Food Co-op
58 E. 4th St.

Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.

DC 37 Headquarters
125 Barclay St.

14TH TO 96TH ST.

New York Public Library
Epiphany Branch
228 E. 23rd St.

Chelsea Square
Restaurant
23rd St. & 9th Ave.

Manhattan
Neighborhood Network
537 W. 59th St.

New York Public Library
Muhlenberg Branch
209 W. 23rd St.

St. Agnes Branch Library
444 Amsterdam Ave.
(btwn 81st and 82nd Sts.)

ABOVE 96TH ST.

New York Public Library
George Bruce Branch
518 W. 125th St.

Book Culture
526 W. 112th St.

New York Public Library
Harlem Branch
9 W. 124th St.

New York Public Library
Hamilton Grange Branch
503 W. 145th St.

Uptown Sister's Books
156 St. & Amsterdam

Bloomingdale
Branch Library
150 W. 100th St.

BROOKLYN
Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy.

BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.

Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.

Tea Lounge
Union St. & Seventh Ave.

Video Gallery
310 Seventh Ave.

Ozzie's Coffee Shop
249 5th Ave.
57 Seventh Ave.

Verb Café
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.

Pillow Café
505 Myrtle Ave.

Sisters Community
Hardware
900 Fulton St.

Brooklyn Public Library
Pacific Street Branch
25 Fourth Ave.

K-Dog & Dune Buggy
43 Lincoln Rd.

Outpost Café
1014 Fulton St.

Blackbird Café
197 Bedford Ave.

'sNice Café
315 Fifth Ave.

Purity Diner
43 Underhill Ave.

Brooklyn
Public Library
Bedford Branch
496 Franklin St.

BRONX
Brook Park
141st St. & Brook Ave.

Mothers on the Move
928 Intervale Ave.

The Point
940 Garrison Ave.

New York Public Library
Mott Haven Library
321 E. 140th St.

STATEN ISLAND
St. George Library
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond
Branch Library
75 Bennett St.

Dot Com Cafe
36 Bay St.

Everything Goes
Book Café
208 Bay St.

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

Phone: 212-904-1282

E-mail: contact@indypendent.org

No Flowers for Bradley Manning

BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

Some 350 activists rallied and marched at the U.S. Marine Base at Quantico, Va., March 20 to demand freedom for Army Private Bradley Manning. Manning, accused of leaking secret U.S. government documents to the WikiLeaks website, has been in solitary confinement at the base for nine months.

The demonstrators, including many U.S. military veterans, wanted to put flowers on a replica of the Iwo Jima memorial that sits outside the entrance to the base, but base authorities closed access to the statue, which

is normally open to the public. Organizers negotiated with the authorities to allow six demonstrators to lay flowers on the memorial, while the rest remained in a pen across the street, but police did not allow the six past the edge of the road, advising them to throw their flowers at the statue, some 20–30 feet away. Outraged, three of the six sat in the middle of Route 1 and were soon joined by others who broke out of the barricades.

More than a hundred police were on hand including military, Prince County mounted, Quantico and Washington, D.C., Metropolitan police. Virginia State Police arrested 31

protesters, pulling some to their feet by their heads and necks. Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame and Ret. Col. Ann Wright, a 50-year Army diplomat, were pushed off their feet onto sitting protesters.

Kevin Zeese, one of the organizers, said Manning “was acting as the Constitution urges. ... He should not be prosecuted for this action. President Obama should use this as an opportunity to reconsider the direction of U.S. foreign policy.”

For more information, see couragetoresist.org or freebradleymanning.org.



THE NOT-SO-THIN BLUE LINE: Virginia State troopers in riot gear move in on demonstrators.

ELLEN DAVIDSON

OUT-OF-CONTROL CROWD CONTROL: Booted Virginia State troopers trample seated protesters at Quantico, Va., action in support of Bradley Manning March 20.



ELLEN DAVIDSON



Rent Regs Near Crisis

By Bennett Baumer

With rent regulation laws set to expire June 15, housing advocates are increasing pressure on New York Gov. Cuomo to renew and strengthen the statutes.

For the past month, a broad coalition of housing, labor, human services and educational groups has occupied the state capitol's staircases and hallways to show their frustration with Cuomo's budget cuts and inaction on legislation to protect affordable housing. These mini-Madisons culminated in a capitol camp-out last week, during which 300 people spent the night in the capitol.

Rent regulation laws, which limit the amount of rent that landlords can charge on more than one million apartments in the New York City area, affect more than 2.5 million residents.

“If the rent laws end, as leases expire landlords would not be obligated to offer renewals and could charge as much as they can get away with,” said Jim Lister, a member of Vocal New York.

In addition to renewing rent regulations, advocates, along with key state legislators including Assembly members Hakeem Jeffries and Linda Rosenthal, are also working to repeal vacancy destabilization, a policy that allows landlords to increase tenants' monthly payments on formerly rent-stabilized apartments once the rent hits \$2,000 a month and the apartment is vacant. Tenant advocates began working to repeal vacancy destabilization two years ago, when the Democrats took control of the State Senate, and they're hoping to achieve this goal by the end of April. As June approaches, tenants will run out of leverage to force a favorable deal on the rent laws.

The Community Service Society estimates that 300,000 units of affordable rent-regulated housing have been lost since vacancy destabilization became law in the 1990s. Tenants' groups also want Cuomo to re-regulate these lost units in addition to renewing the rent laws.

Cuomo's base, the Committee to Save New York, an astroturf group composed of Wall Street and real estate interests, will certainly push back against rent regulations, especially since they already defeated the millionaire's tax and backed every penny of budget cuts. The group is running a public relations campaign to build public support for austerity — though tenants counter that it does not cost the state anything to renew and strengthen the rent laws.

The landlord lobby is also urging its Senate Republican allies not to strengthen amendments and to hold out until June to end rent regulation — a frightening prospect for tenants.

Despite the odds, tenant advocates are continuing their efforts to get Cuomo to reconsider.

On a recent day in the capitol, about 50 members of Vocal New York, one of the most boisterous presences in Albany, protested outside of Cuomo's second floor office.

Scavenging the City

BY ERIKA EICHELBERGER

Vidal, 45, is small and reserved. He became homeless after he lost his job as a dishwasher two years ago. In order to eke out a living, he began sifting through the trash for bottles and cans and redeeming their nickel deposits. “Tiene que trabajar,” he says. “You have to work.”

With 43.6 million Americans living in poverty and the real unemployment rate at 15.9 percent, many New Yorkers are turning to the informal economy to scrape by. Street vendors, bucket drummers and day laborers fill the cracks in the formal economy, as do canners. Un- and underemployed New Yorkers who collect bottles and cans report earning an average of \$40 a day.

Immigrant canners are often undocumented and have no recourse to unemployment benefits or public assistance in the recession. Their numbers have ballooned in relation to the old guard, so to speak.

“In the early 1980s it was nothing but black people doing cans,” says Eugene Gadsden, a former can collector and community activist.

halting speech and a warm smile, he says he moved to New York City from Charleston, Va., because of a girl when he was 19. He sold ice cream for a while, but eventually lost his job and started living on the street. As a rookie, Gadsden brought in \$2 to \$3 per day, but after perfecting his trade and kicking his crack habit, canning afforded him his first apartment and earned him the title of “King of the Cans” on PBS’s *NOW*.

Gadsden’s cousin, Jean Rice, 71, has a husky voice and dusty gray eyes and wears an oversized tan suit jacket. In the early 1980s, he was living with his aunt in Connecticut and studying criminal justice administration when she was murdered, and Rice was left homeless. So he started collecting cans with Gadsden.

Canning is a grueling occupation. Canners routinely work up to 12 hours a day combing through public trash bins and curbside recycling (which is not illegal if you’re on foot). Because they can’t bring their valuables into shelters, canners are forced to spend the night sleeping outside with the day’s collection, waiting for the supermarket or redemption center to open in the morning.



COLLECTING COIN: Maria Berrio, a 72-year-old canner from Columbia, collects redeemable cans and bottles in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Berrio also works with Sure We Can.



LOADING UP: Eugene Gadsden, a 53-year-old canner, brings sorted bottles and cans to a truck that will deliver them back to the beverage distribution company from where they came.

Conversations with 40-odd canners at supermarkets and redemption centers throughout all boroughs but Staten Island found that the majority were first-generation immigrants who had started canning within the past three years. For the most part, they are not homeless, but are on the edge. Some have been laid off recently, others work meager-paying jobs.

CANNERS' RIGHTS

Scavenging has a long history. Until the end of the 19th century, scavengers took care of the bulk of waste collection in many U.S. cities. During the Great Depression, the jobless collected scrap metal to earn money. While dump scavenging was banned in the 1950s, collecting recyclables resurfaced a few decades later as states passed returnable container laws. Today, only 11 states have bottle bills, which require consumers to pay a refundable deposit on beverage containers.

In 1982, well before the city’s Department of Sanitation implemented municipal recycling in the 1990s, New York State passed the Returnable Container Act. The act required a five-cent deposit on beer and soda containers and provided an unplanned source of income to hundreds of homeless people in the city. Canners were born.

Gadsden, 53, was one of the original canners. A tall, African-American man with

When the only nonprofit redemption center in the city shuttered in 2005, supermarkets with “reverse vending machines” were the only option for canners in Manhattan. Grocery stores often refused to redeem the full \$12 worth (about one garbage bag full) of cans required by law, according to Picture the Homeless (PTH), a grassroots homeless advocacy organization. Even if stores did accept the full amount, canners still had to lug their bags around to different grocery stores to redeem a day’s worth of cans.

Gadsden and Rice joined other homeless canners and formed the Canners’ Committee at PTH to organize around canners’ rights. The committee succeeded in getting then-Attorney General Eliot Spitzer to force supermarkets to comply with recycling laws. They also pushed Albany to pass the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, which became law one year ago. As a result, bottled water now carries a deposit, there are no longer limits to the number of cans and bottles a supermarket will redeem and 80 percent of the unclaimed deposits that used to be returned to the beverage industry are diverted to a general state fund.

In 2007, Gadsden and Sister Ana Martinez de Luco, a canner from Spain who is homeless by choice, started Sure We Can, the only nonprofit redemption center in the city that specifically caters to homeless canners, located in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

De Luco dreams of one day linking the canners’ movement in New York with waste pickers worldwide.

“I want to work to get a positive view of this huge work which is the only way to survive for millions in the world,” she says.

Asked how she became homeless, she replies with a smile in her thick Castilian, “By going out of the house to become homeless.”

NEW GREEN ECONOMY?

Canning has seen a boom in recent years, and not just because water bottles now carry deposits.

While a 2005 survey commissioned by PTH found that there were around 1,000 canners in New York City, de Luco estimates that there are now thousands of can collectors throughout the five boroughs.

Donald, 55, a tall, thin African-American man, was laid off from his job as a checker at a grocery store three years ago. He gets food stamps and his wife helps out with rent, but canning helps pay the bills. He’s not ashamed of what he does. “People look at it like a Great Recession type of job. These days you can’t be choosy,” he says.

The canners that scour the city each day take care of a good portion of the city’s re-

cycling. Picture the Homeless estimated in 2005 that canners redeemed 12.7 percent of all returned beverage containers, and that number is likely higher today.

Sure We Can has garnered city interest through the amount of cans that people redeem at their center. De Luco said the Department of Sanitation recently stopped by their offices to inquire about the abrupt decline in the volume of residential recycling.

In the absence of a massive green jobs initiative by the Obama administration, canners unwittingly connect the dots between a floundering economy and domestic green jobs.

The White House estimates that the \$80 billion invested in clean energy projects through the Recovery Act created 267,341 jobs, but not enough people are feeling it.

Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, who worked with the canning committee at PTH, says the work canners do points toward the potential for green job creation, if only in the abstract.

“The bottle bill shows us in a really crude, not very intentional way, that the possibility is there. Now let’s go about it not as a back-handed side effect. If we did it intentionally, just imagine the things we could be doing,” Kooperkamp says.



RESEARCHING REDEMPTION: Ana Martinez de Luco (left), investigates what beverage distribution company a bottle of beer might have come from. Distribution companies are required by law to take back all of the bottles or cans they sell, and much of de Luca’s work involves laborious research to determine where each of the thousands of beverage brands come from so they can be sorted and returned to the correct company.

The Case Against the Middle Class

BY ARUN GUPTA

In an era of insecurity, we all want security. We want a decent home to call our own, healthcare to heal us when we are sick or old, education to improve our minds and job prospects, healthy food and clean water to nourish us, income to provide for all our needs and even some affordable luxuries, a career to give us social status and a sense of self-worth, and a pension for our golden years.

These seemingly universal desires define the post-WWII American Dream, and are still the reference point for both left and right. The “Golden Age of American Capitalism” from the mid-1940s to the early 1970s is commonly seen as the triumph of the middle class, which saw the fruits of a robust capitalist economy extended to tens of millions.

But today, as we are trapped in the fault lines of a violent global economy, these dreams seem as archaic as waking up at dawn with the grandparents, children and cousins to milk cows, bake pies and plow the fields.

However outdated the American Dream, organized labor and liberals cling to it as they retreat from the right-wing and corporate blitzkrieg. The battlefield in this war is social spending and the public sector, and the situation is desperate.

For *Mother Jones*, it’s an “Attack on the middle class. Jim Hightower describes it as “the corporate-GOP attack on the middle class.” According to 9to5, the National Association of Working Women, Gov. Scott Walker is trying to “deny the American Dream to the vast majority of Wisconsinites.” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka says, “It is our job to channel this Midwest uprising, this populist outcry into the large-scale creation of good jobs that can resuscitate America’s middle class, America’s people and our economy.”

Really? The contention that the middle class is suddenly under attack – and by implication should be defended – is thoroughly flawed. For one, this trend goes back at least 30 years to the savaging of private-sector unionism and the social welfare state combined with deregulation, reloaded militarism and tax breaks for the rich. The current attack on public-sector unions and the remnants of welfare is just the latest stage.

Additionally, the attack on the public sector is by not an attack on the middle class as a whole. After all, the Tea Party movement, the right’s shock troops, is solidly middle class. Its ideals are captured in the saying “Equality of opportunity does not guarantee equality of outcome.” The right rejects public-sector jobs that guarantee incomes, benefits, tenure and pensions because they violate the market, the well-spring of freedom

and liberty.

In their mind, we live in a meritocracy where everyone should be subject to the same chaotic, contingent and uncertain market forces.

No doubt this right-wing ideology is warmed-over Social Darwinism, hypocritical and would lead right back to the boom-and-bust capitalism of Dickensian England. (The Tea Party is quiet on the subject of the mortgage-interest deduction for homeowners that will cost an estimated \$131 billion in 2012.) But tens of millions of Americans embrace individualism. This segment of the middle class – entrepreneurs, supervisors, managers and self-employed plumbers, carpenters, cooks, doctors, lawyers, accountants, financial planners and myriad other professions – is very real and it’s flexing its political power right now.

PARADISE LOST

The post-World War II ideal makes liberals like Paul Krugman mush-brained. He writes in *The Conscience of a Liberal*: “The political and economic environment of my youth stands revealed as a paradise lost, an exceptional episode in our nation’s history.”

It’s only time and a decayed political vision that makes 1950s America seem like paradise. To be sure, the working class benefited from rising productivity with rising wages, incomes rose across the board, many African-Americans landed good-paying factory jobs and social welfare expanded under Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society.

Yet the 1960s youth and counterculture rebellions were in reaction to the banality of the middle class. The New Left critiqued a society where basic material needs seem to have been satisfied by American capitalism, European social democracy and the Soviet’s “bureau-

cratic collectivism,” but work was alienating, racism institutionalized, community nonexistent, sexual mores repressive, and daily life atomizing, meaningless and suffocating.

The revolt was also against the link between the middle-class lifestyle and the warfare state that spawned the terror of imminent nuclear war and U.S.-backed coups, vicious dictators, assassinations and wars in the developing world that kept commodities – copper from Chile, bananas from Guatemala, sugar from Cuba, oil from Iran, rubber from Indonesia and tin from Bolivia – inexpensive so as to subsidize American businesses and the middle class.

Liberals conveniently forget that middle-class labor was a full partner in the Cold War. It worked with the CIA through the AFL-CIO’s American Institute for Free Labor Development to destroy independent labor movements in the Third World.

Labor has mostly left behind this sordid past, though it did try to undermine Hugo Chavez’s government in Venezuela last decade. But it is reticent to confront the military-security state that consumes about \$1 trillion in public spending even as public sector unions try to hang on to a few more pennies.

Perhaps U.S. labor leaders realize the Pentagon, with its thousand-odd overseas bases, still serves a useful role in ordering the world. After all, the middle class benefits as much as ever from depressed wages and commodity prices in the developing world that keep low-cost goods streaming from factory to port to big box to McMansion.

By the 1960s the promise of prosperity for all, which defenders of the middle class today harken back to, seemed within reach. Yet working-class consciousness was being sapped by

consumption. No longer was the goal to transform social relations and bring forth the “New Man” (and Woman), it was to get a new Pontiac, an in-ground pool, a bigger house, the latest

doodads. The middle-class lifestyle frayed the bonds of worker solidarity.

Ultimately, the concept of the middle class is inherently anti-political. It is defined by consumption: a mortgage, multiple cars, stylish clothes, furniture and electronics, and affordable luxuries. We can’t have a yacht, but we can go on an annual cruise. We can’t buy a villa in Tuscany, but we can holiday in one. We can’t afford a private chef, but we can visit Le Bernadin on a special occasion. Luxury goods makers from Prada and LVMH to Mercedes Benz and Tiffany have aggressively expanded their businesses by creating lines of downscale luxuries for the middle class.

When we struggle for better wages and benefits and more social welfare, what is the goal? If it’s for a growing middle class, we’ve been there, done that and failed miserably. What do we say to the more than 2 billion Chinese and Indians who want a middle-class lifestyle? In a time of runaway global warming, fighting for the middle class is like fighting for global ecocide.

ROSE-COLORED POLITICS

When liberals, labor leaders and even some leftists issue a call to the barricades to defend the middle class, they romanticize the postwar boom in other ways.

The social compact between labor and capital was premised on McCarthyism: purging communist, socialist and anarchists by the thousands from unions. This Faustian bargain increased wages and benefits for labor. But it sowed the seeds of its destruction. Without a mass-based anti-capitalist left, it became the junior partner to capital. Once the social compact outlived its usefulness by the 1970s, capital ditched it. Capital was then free to exploit the low wages in the Third World that the AFL-CIO had helped maintain.

Starting with the New Deal, the prevailing political order was corporatist – government brought together major stakeholders such as labor and business to help them strike mutually beneficial agreements. After World War II, as long as the Bretton Woods economic order prevailed (which put some limits on the flow of finance capital), U.S. corporations were tied to the domestic market and other nation states could not compete with American business, organized labor had the power to extract concessions from corporations.

Yet corporatism was uncritically, and unconsciously, revived by gooney-eyed liberals and lefties who backed Obama in 2008. A “New” New Deal was based on the fallacy that we could re-create a national capitalism by spending trillions on green jobs and energy. Obama would



FRANKREYNOSO.COM

Continue on
page 6



Middle Class

Continued from page 5

bring together capital and labor to fund and build the factories that would manufacture electric cars, solar panels, green homes, wind farms, hi-speed rail and a nationwide smart electrical grid.

We would all drive a Prius into the sunrise of a new middle-class prosperity based on hi-tech manufacturing jobs, generous social welfare and strong unions.

The problem is that not just financial capital, but industrial and merchant capital have largely unmoored themselves from geography. Sure they need factories, roads, electricity, docks, airports and warehouses, but their ability to jump from one low-cost region to another means American unions, in their current form, have little leverage over capital.

The UAW fell into the corporatist trap after the government took over GM and Chrysler in 2009. With a White House proclaiming, “Fuck the UAW,” it hammered labor in the interest of capital. The result was a wage cut of 50 percent for many new hires and even some existing autoworkers, putting them on par with non-unionized workers in foreign auto plants in the United States. As for GM CEO Dan Akerson, Obama’s “pay czar” determined that his \$9 million in compensation for 2011 was fair.

INFRASTRUCTURE OF DISSENT

Free-market ideology is a cover for the Republican and corporate goal of destroying unions so as to destroy the infrastructure of dissent. Yet labor leaders seem unable to grasp the implications of this.

For three decades, labor leaders have accepted market logic of givebacks: the pie is shrinking, we all have to share the pain, givebacks save jobs and help make American business more competitive. But concessions don’t save jobs they only increase profits. Unions have known this for decades, but are unable to offer an alternative. In 1989 one labor leader told the *New York Times*, “The whole history of wage concessions since 1979 pretty much proves that they don’t preserve jobs.” In a world with capital unbound, there is always a country with even lower wages, fewer benefits, less regulation and higher profits, meaning one round of givebacks leads inexorably to the next.

The same logic is now being applied to the public sector. Wisconsin labor leaders capitulated on all wage and benefit cuts, begging only to save collective bargaining that was then eliminated in short order. Unless unions pose a powerful idea to counter the logic of capital – such as “labor creates all wealth” – they will remain stuck in a downward spiral.

The protests from Cairo to Madison have been inspiring, even beautiful. In a revolutionary moment, we realize our desires to

be better people, for an ideal community and for a just world. Our utopias take form in new social relations. In Tahrir Square, Egyptian women experienced themselves as human beings with full agency and free from sexual harassment. In Madison, protesters in the Capitol building lauded the camaraderie, peacefulness and collective labor involved in the occupation.

GENERAL STRIKE

In Madison, however, the intoxicating talk of “general strike” has been replaced by recall elections to oust eight Republican state senators. A general strike requires months of education, debate, organizing, community outreach, producing media, building links to other sectors. Labor has the resources in terms of money, staff and infrastructure. There is no guarantee of victory, but it would be a glorious display of the chaos and creativity of democracy.

A recall election, on the other hand, is authoritarian politics run by self-selected consultants, pollsters, wealthy donors and Democratic Party honchos. They need labor, but only as a mindless automaton to gather signatures, do phone banking, get out the vote and spread messaging decreed from above.

This is symptomatic of labor’s deeper malaise in which it can’t see beyond the market, the middle class and electoral politics. By some estimates, in the last two election cycles, organized labor poured more than half-a-billion dollars into the Democratic Party with disastrous results.

What if organized labor had poured one or two hundred million dollars into organizing the unemployed? This could have created a mass popular force on the left, but its politics might have been more radical than middle-class conformism. That’s because we have entered the jobless future. The free market simply cannot provide for the 25-30 million Americans who are unemployed or underemployed. (Plus, the unemployed don’t pay dues, so how does that benefit labor leaders?)

Labor would have also had to confront the fact that it long ago abandoned the poor. This was a contradiction in how labor leaders frame the struggle in Wisconsin as being about collective bargaining for public servants – the path to the middle class – rather than trying to build an alliance of single mothers, the poor, immigrants and the wide range of other groups on the chopping block.

After decades of being battered, it’s tempting to take refuge in historical forces, to say our options are limited. Except the electrifying wave of revolutions and uprisings shows that we have agency. That means making thoughtful political choices, and a good place to start is by rejecting the middle-class ideal of consumption for the human ideal of liberation.

THE INDYPENDENT



JOIN ME IN BECOMING A REGULAR DONOR TO THE INDYPENDENT. It takes money to create media where we can discuss, debate and analyze events such as the historic uprisings from the Middle East to the Midwest.

Most important, by building a project like *The Indypendent* that helps build the Left, we are expressing the type of collective action we need to forge a new future.

—STANLEY ARONOWITZ



YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT THE INDYPENDENT!

I would like to become a monthly sustainer:

☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ OTHER: \$ _____

I would like to make a one-time contribution:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$125 ☐ \$250 ☐ OTHER: \$ _____

If you become a sustainer or contribute \$50 or more, you also receive a one-year subscription to *The Indypendent*. (A one-year subscription of 16 issues is \$29.)

I am paying by:

☐ Check ☐ Cash ☐ Credit Card

Shipping Address:

Full Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

CREDIT CARD: Billing Address (if different than above):

Type (Mastercard, Visa or American Express): _____

CC Number: _____

Security Code: _____

Expiration Date: _____

All your information is kept strictly confidential. We will only email or call if we have a problem fulfilling your donation. Donations above \$100 are tax deductible. Please make payment to The Institute for Media Analysis.

GOP Targets Fragile Gains of Home-Based Caregivers

BY STEVE EARLY

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is not alone in bashing public workers these days. In the view of Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, a potential 2012 GOP presidential candidate, collective bargaining has transformed civil servants into “a new privileged class.” For many newly elected Republican governors and legislators, the solution to the budget problems of state and local government is to strip public employees of negotiating rights while cutting their existing pay and benefits.

Teachers, social workers, public safety officers and many other white-collar and blue-collar employees are the main target of this multi-state assault. Decades of union bargaining in a majority of states has provided millions of public sector workers with the kind of job-based health insurance and retirement coverage that all Americans should enjoy, but that most don’t.

Meanwhile, there’s another group of public employees — only recently arrived at the bargaining table — who are not “privileged” by any standard. These are the hundreds of thousands of direct-care providers who work with children, the aged or disabled in their own or other families’ homes. These caregivers are mainly low-income, non-white, female and, in some states, foreign born. Their contingent labor is largely invisible as well as undervalued. Even with union representation, these jobs pay little more than the minimum wage and lack significant benefits.

ACTION GETS RESULTS

Since 1999, action and organizing by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and four other unions enabled 600,000 home-based workers to win collective bargaining rights. Previously, home healthcare aides and childcare providers were classified as “independent contractors” and had no organizational voice in “non-traditional” workplaces. In return for union recognition and initial contracts obtained from union-friendly Democratic lawmakers, SEIU, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the United Auto Workers (UAW) all agreed that their new home-based worker bargaining units would not be covered by existing state worker pension or medical plans.

Now the budget ax is falling on these workers. Since January, more than 50,000 home-based workers have lost much-needed union protection. Many more will lose their jobs in these states and in others run by Democrats, due to public spending cuts in home-based childcare and health services. University of California professor Eileen Boris characterizes these programs as “the poor caring for the poor.” When funding is reduced and direct-care jobs are eliminated, low-income Americans suffer as both workers and clients.

In Michigan, 40,000 childcare workers represented by the UAW and AFSCME won bargaining rights in December 2006 through an executive order. On March 1, however, Republican Gov. Rick Snyder cut pay by 25 percent and terminated union

dues collection for more than 16,000 of these workers. In Ohio, GOP Gov. John Kasich similarly rescinded contract coverage for 14,000 recently unionized childcare and home care workers. Another group of 4,000 home healthcare aides in Wisconsin failed to win legislative approval of the \$9 per hour minimum wage they negotiated last year. Now, as part of Gov. Scott Walker’s repeal of public-sector bargaining in the state, he has abolished the Quality Home Care Authority

because of a reported shortfall between what employers contributed to the fund and the higher premiums now being charged by its insurance provider. (Most of the children affected are eligible for alternative coverage through New York State’s Children Health Plus program.)

Spending reductions announced in March by California Gov. Jerry Brown included nearly \$3 billion worth of cuts in Medicaid and welfare-to-work programs.



CHRISTINE HALE

created in 2009 to facilitate unionization of these personal care attendants.

This trend is not limited to Republicans. While not threatening collective bargaining rights, new Democratic governors are squeezing benefits that affect unionized caregivers. In New York State, Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s budget slashes more than \$2 billion from education and healthcare spending. New York City-based 1199 SEIU, which represents 70,000 home care workers, is optimistic that its members will be protected. “Delivering state savings without disruption to Medicaid beneficiaries and their caregivers is an enormous feat,” union president George Gresham told *The New York Times* in late February.

As 1199 pointed out in a statement last Fall, “state Medicaid funding to the home health services sector has been cut 9 separate times in just the last three years.” As many as half of the union’s home care members, who often make less than \$15,000 a year, have lost their coverage under the 1199 healthcare trust. In addition, to protect the medical benefits of working members who still qualify, thousands of dependent children have been dropped from the plan

because of a reported shortfall between what employers contributed to the fund and the higher premiums now being charged by its insurance provider. (Most of the children affected are eligible for alternative coverage through New York State’s Children Health Plus program.)

FRAGILE FOOTHOLD

When CWA first gained a fragile foothold in this sector six years ago, the union partnered with both AFSCME and the now defunct ACORN. In New Jersey, where CWA is the largest public employee union, organizers knocked on childcare providers’ doors using lists provided by the state and leads obtained from the Newark, Trenton and Camden chapters of ACORN. CWA and AFSCME collected enough union authorization cards to win recognition for a new Child Care Workers Union (CCWU) via an executive order signed by Gov. Jon Corzine in August 2006. In a related CWA organizing drive, Corzine granted bargaining rights to 1,000 State Division of Developmental

Disabilities employees who provide respite care and other home-based services to the disabled and their families.

Prior to this, the 6,000 childcare workers involved averaged about \$17,000 a year, with few benefits and often only part-time work. Most of these positions are funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, otherwise known as “workfare.” Participants in TANF take care of their own children or the children of other recipients who are employed in low-wage jobs outside their own homes. The initial CCWU agreement with the state increased annual per-child payments to providers; a worker caring for five children could earn \$7,200 more annually by the end of the four-year contract.

The CCWU contract also obligated the state to provide parents with seniority lists so they would know who was an experienced day care provider and who was new to the job. A grievance procedure was created, which included arbitration of unresolved disputes about contract violations. Compared to the benefit-studded agreement covering regular state workers — now under attack by Corzine’s Republican successor, Gov. Chris Christie — the CCWU agreement was bare bones. It didn’t improve healthcare, deferring the issue to a follow-up study and subsequent negotiations that won’t be easy in the current bargaining climate.

CWA and AFSCME did manage to scratch out a victory by getting legislative approval for the union recognition deals during a lame duck session in Trenton before Christie’s inauguration in January 2010.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

As Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein argue in their forthcoming book, *Caring for America*, the national recession, state budget crises and right-wing ascendancy in some state capitals has exposed “an ‘Achilles heel of the organizing model established by SEIU and copied by other unions.’” Boris and Klein have long expressed concern about whether “empowering care workers” was really part of the union agenda. While supportive of the economic gains made for home healthcare aides in New York, Illinois and California — where Democrats still control the governor’s office — the authors warned about the weakness of “bureaucratic unionism that reinforces the old racialized gender distinctions of care work and stymies the advancement of rank-and-file women.”

Building real organization among home-based workers isolated from co-workers and lacking traditional union structures (like a shop steward network) is even more necessary. As Boris and Klein note, political deals made at the top have become vulnerable in a sector where the work was “already insecure and unstable, with constant turnover.” Home-based worker unionism will only survive, they argue, if there is “a social depth and culture to the union that enables it to live on [either] when workers move in and out, or the political deals fall apart.”

Continued on page 9

Law and Disorder
radio

WBAI
99.5 FM

Mondays
at 9am

DOWNLOAD PODCASTS
at lawanddisorder.org

“Our basic constitutional rights are in jeopardy. “Law and Disorder” is an excellent magazine format radio show, hosted by progressive lawyers who analyze the state of civil rights in this post-9/11 period. From attacks on Muslims at home to torture abroad, “Law and Disorder” puts these constitutional attacks into perspective.”

—AMY GOODMAN,
HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights; Michael Smith, New York City attorney and author

Now on Facebook.com



bluestockings

radical bookstore | activist center
fair trade cafe
172 ALLEN ST • 212-777-6028
bluestockings.com

WED, APRIL 13, 7PM • FREE

READING: JOANNE SMITH, MEGHAN HUPPUGH & MANDY VAN DEVEN: *HEY SHORTY!* Please join members of Girls for Gender Equity as they discuss their new book and their ongoing work to combat sexual harassment in schools.

SAT, APRIL 16, 7PM • FREE

READING: GRACE LEE BOGGS AND SCOTT KURASHIGE: *THE NEXT AMERICAN REVOLUTION: SUSTAINABLE ACTIVISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*. Join legendary community activist Grace Lee Boggs and co-author Scott Kurashige in a conversation about their new book, which reflects on Grace's decades of movement building in Detroit and what must emerge in the next American Revolution.

MON, APRIL 25, 7PM • FREE

READING: TOMAZ MONIZ: *RAD DAD ZINE*, WITH AYUN HALLIDAY, VIKKI LAW, ROBYN JORDAN AND JOHN MEJIAS. Join Moniz, along with more rad mamas, papas, and teachers for a fun-filled, kid-friendly and thought-provoking evening of zine readings about the pain, pleasures and politics of parenting and teaching.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN: Notes from London

BY PETER BRATSI

Class struggle is like gravity: we can recognize it only through its effects. When apples or wages fall, the forces of mass and class are at work. The study of class, as with gravity, is the study of movement, action and power.

Given this, the significance of the half-million strong protest in London on March 26 against the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's many planned cuts to social services and public spending is still unknown. This most recent demonstration followed the lead of student protests late last year. The energy of the student movement took most by surprise and gave a glimmer of hope to all those who oppose the regressive policies being pursued by the current regime.

Organized by the Trades Union Congress, a trade union umbrella group, the bulk of demonstrators were public-sector workers and their families, allied private-sector workers, concerned beneficiaries of public services (especially students) and various factions of the extra-parliamentary left. However, the class dimensions of the demonstration are not yet obvious nor are they reducible to the social-economic positions or to the intentions of those of us who were there. The class character of the demonstration will be manifest by its impact and what will follow in the months ahead.

One very encouraging aspect of the demonstration was its size. It was, by far, the largest demonstration in the U.K. since those in early 2003 opposing the impending war in Iraq. One thing is certain, however: The March 26 protest will have as little impact on policymakers as the antiwar demonstrations did. Within the “democratic” world at least, orderly popular protests have proven to be of little consequence when it comes to influencing policies.

If we accept this point, the political potential of the demonstration resides with its capacity to shape public opinion and the thinking and will of those who participated in it.

Two disparate possibilities exist. One is that many of those in attendance on March 26 will have relieved themselves of some complicity regarding the current political situation. From new Labor Party leader “Red Ed” Miliband to the hundreds of thousands of public sector workers, a key part of the demonstration was its vocal repudiation of

the planned policies and cuts. Regardless of such declarations, however, it is largely these individuals, civil servants, who will be charged with executing and managing the proposed cuts and policy changes. Will they obey orders from on top?

There seems little reason to think that public employees such as doctors, nurses, teachers, academics, firefighters and social workers would not follow every command and request made of them. Some public employees, namely the police, have already shown they enjoy enforcing order as evidenced by aggressive tactics such as “kettling” and mass arrests in previous demonstrations. (In a twist, protesters turned the tables March 26, trapping groups of police a number of times.)

If this is the case, the protest would have mainly functioned to relieve a great many civil



MARCH AGAINST AUSTERITY: More than 500,000 demonstrated in London against spending cuts.

servants of guilt and trepidation when they eventually carry out the cuts. One can almost hear the refrain: We did our part, we went to London and protested, but now Parliament has spoken and we must abide by the law. Just as the war in Iraq went forward with almost no real resistance following the massive demonstrations (even though one third to one half of those in the U.K. declared themselves to be against the war) so it may very well be with the pending budget cuts.

A second possibility is that this demonstration functions as an educational moment for the anti-cuts movement. Just as the student protests served as a model and inspiration for the broader anti-cuts movement, the protests of this past week may well serve as an organizational stepping stone for future attacks against the regime. One potential scenario is a national strike of all public sector workers. Some of the more radical factions within the

trade unions have issued a call for a general strike. A massive strike would greatly increase the level of conflict and put much more pressure on the government to temper or reverse its agenda.

Another possible outcome of the demonstration is the ever-increasing radicalization of students and other young dissidents. Partly as a response to the heavy-handed actions of the police and partly as a product of principled political reflection and organization, the extra-parliamentary left, especially anarchism, is on the rise. There were hundreds of mask-wearing protesters willing to engage in property destruction and risk arrest. Their occupation of Fortnum and Mason, one of the most famous stores in London, and their attack on the Ritz Hotel and dozens of stores on Oxford Street, especially those known for

not paying any taxes, is a clear sign that the movement is growing. Although there may still be far to go before the streets of London look like those of Seattle in 1999 or Athens in 2008, major progress is being made.

According to the historian Karl Polanyi, the working class in Britain has been the most repressed and beaten down in all of Europe. Polanyi asserts that this has rendered them nearly incapable of any self-directed, progressive, political action. Nonetheless, we have seen flashes of political possibilities, such as the poll tax riots of 1990 that brought down Margaret Thatcher and the fierce but unsuccessful coal miners' strike of 1984-85 that broke organized labor in the U.K.

The stakes of the current attack on working people are clear. Orderly demonstrations and petitions are not sufficient for fighting the power of the ruling classes and their wild-eyed servants within Parliament.

A new chapter in disruptive, disciplined and disorderly political action by the dominated is necessary. If marching is as far as the political efforts go, the overcrowded classrooms, shrinking universities, declining life expectancy and decreasing wages and pensions will be all the evidence we need for understanding how the class struggle in Britain is progressing.

Peter Bratsis teaches political theory at the University of Salford. He is the author of Everyday Life and the State and an editor of the journal Situations.

Black Bloc Bewilders Bobbies and Toffs

BY SIMON CHILDS

Central London was brought to a standstill on Saturday, March 26, as hundreds of thousands of people marched against the government's cuts to public services and activists took direct action against symbolic targets.

The Trades Union Congress-organized march far exceeded its expected turnout of 100,000 with estimates varying from 250,000 to 800,000. People from every corner of Britain attended to register their anger at the austere economic policies of the Conservative-led government, which is axing public sector jobs and cutting social programs such as the National Health Service.

As protesters gathered at London's storied Hyde Park to hear speeches against the cuts from trade union leaders, radical activists embarked on a “sightseeing tour of London.” Banks accused of tax dodging had windows broken and were bombarded with

paint bombs. Symbols of wealth, including a Porsche dealership, were also attacked and daubed with graffiti. A traffic sign was tossed through a window of the Ritz Hotel.

UKuncut, a direct-action group that targets tax-dodging corporations, staged an occupation of Fortnum and Masons the department store famous for selling picnic baskets for tens of thousands of dollars. The store's owners have a 54 percent stake in Associated British Foods, which stands accused of avoiding more than \$65 million in taxes.

The occupiers left the building following assurances from the police that they would be allowed to go free if they cooperated, only to be trapped and in many cases arrested as they left.

Late in the day, a few hundred protesters attempted to occupy Trafalgar Square for the night. Sound systems and samba bands created a carnival atmosphere, which was soured as riot police locked down the

square, seemingly in reaction to paint bombs being thrown at a clock counting down to the London Olympic Games in 2012.

Government Business Secretary Vince Cable responded to the march by insisting the cuts would continue: “No government ... would change its economic strategy simply in response to a demonstration of that kind.”

Nonetheless, the government appeared rattled by the militancy of the direct action. Home Secretary Theresa May told the House of Commons, “I am willing to consider powers which would ban known hooligans from attending rallies and marches, and I will look into the powers the police already have to force the removal of face coverings and balaclavas. If the police need more help to do their work, I will not hesitate in granting it to them.”

Simon Childs is a student, activist and citizen journalist based in Newcastle, England.

LEONARD WEINGLASS, WARRIOR FOR JUSTICE

BY LINDA BACKIEL

Editor's Note: Leonard Weinglass, one of the great radical lawyers of an era that included William Kuntzler and Author Kinoy, died on March 23, 2011, at the age of 77 from pancreatic cancer.

Like most criminal defense lawyers, Len sometimes said his job was defending the indefensible. He was not trying to put moral distance between himself and his clients. Never. He was just too modest to say that he was committed to achieving the impossible. He rarely failed.

He did not often create great precedent; he liked to win his cases, and the prosecution can't appeal acquittals. But when his work — together with other National Lawyers Guild (NLG) greats like Arthur Kinoy — did create precedent, it was big. For example, in the 1972 case of *United States v. United States District Court*, the Supreme Court determined that the government has no inherent power to conduct warrantless wiretaps of domestic dissidents.

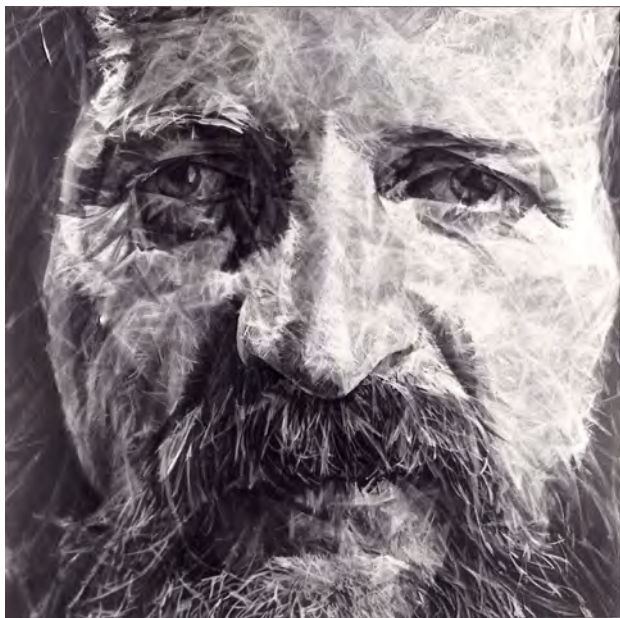
Many of our great freedom fighters and bravest critics of injustice owe their freedom — some, their lives — to him. At the time of his death, Len was working on a habeas petition for one of the five Cubans convicted for defending their country from Miami-based terrorists. Len toured and spoke tirelessly about the travesty that passed for a trial in Miami. As a political lawyer he understood that politics was both the reason for their conviction and what will ultimately force open the prison doors.

Len was not a one-note man, but a one-man band. He knew the anthem of every struggle, but had little time for ideological purity. He learned from the greats, defending Angela Davis; Skyhorse and Mowhawk of the American Indian Movement; Mumia Abu Jamal; Guild lawyer and activist Kiko Martínez; Tom Hayden and the Chicago Eight; the Atmore Holman Brothers; Anthony Russo, who, together with Daniel Ellsberg, leaked the Pentagon Papers, and WikiLeaks Julian Assange.

He devoted not months, but years to a case: 23 to secure the release of Kathy

Boudin, 15 for that of Puerto Rican independentista Juan Segarra. But he also represented abused tenants, striking workers and, long before it was fashionable — or considered feasible — the brutally repressed residents of Newark. He reveled in the zaniness of his friend Abbie Hoffman; his friendship with Tom Hayden spanned almost half a century.

A former co-chair of the NLG's Interna-



LEONARD WEINGLASS, 1977, acrylic on canvas by Arnold Mesches, Estate of Leonard Weinglass, NYC

tional Committee, Len's passports are an itinerary of liberation struggles, from Cuba to Vietnam, the West Bank, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Philippines, Russia and elsewhere. He helped to win a two-decade struggle against the deportation of activists accused of raising funds for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and documented human rights abuses around the globe.

While in constant motion, he cleared land — not too much — built a log house, planted trees and pondered the enigma of gardening in Hardiness Zone 5 with the same zeal with which he would begin a cross examination: "Now, Agent, isn't it a fact that after you recorded my client and his wife in the shower, you put the tape in your car and rode around listening to it for days?"

It was impossible to say "No" to Len.

There will be a public memorial for Leonard Weinglass on Friday, May 13, at 7 pm at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 West 64th St.

Labor

Continued from page 7

The dramatic and unusual display of grassroots activism in Wisconsin recently has shown the potential for a different kind of public sector unionism. In long established bargaining units of teachers, state workers and municipal employees, rank-and-file activists have broken with business as usual, in both their lobbying techniques and their direct action on the job (like public school teachers doing mass sick-outs). For hundreds of thousands of low-wage direct-care providers, the fight to defend modest contract gains or recently acquitted bargaining rights is an important, if little noticed, part of the ongoing struggle in Madison and other state capitals.

It's not just a fight for what unions invariably, and misleadingly, call "the middle class." The working poor who care for other

poor people — and many of us in other classes — haven't made it that far up the ladder yet. Their paltry pay, lack of social recognition and benefit coverage and limited training and opportunities for promotion all belie the importance of the work they do every day. Organized labor would do well to put their plight front and center because there are no public-sector "fat cats," real or imagined, anywhere to be found in the fields of home care and childcare.

Steve Early is labor journalist and lawyer who worked as a union organizer for Communications Workers of America District 1. He is the author most recently of The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor, civilwarsinlabor.org, and can be reached at lsupport@aol.com.

DEMOCRACY NOW!

Independent News Hour
with Amy Goodman
and Juan Gonzalez
TV-Radio-Internet



The corporate
media got it
wrong on Iraq.
Tune in to the
show that
got it right.

PACIFICA RADIO
99.5 WBAI
8AM, Mon-Fri

PUBLIC ACCESS TV
CUNY-TV Channel 75 (All Boroughs)
6:30PM Mon-Fri, 1AM Mon-Thurs

Manhattan MNN Channel 34/82
8AM & 7PM Mon-Fri

Brooklyn BCAT Channel 56/69
9AM Mon-Fri

Bronxnet Channel 67
9AM Tues & Thurs

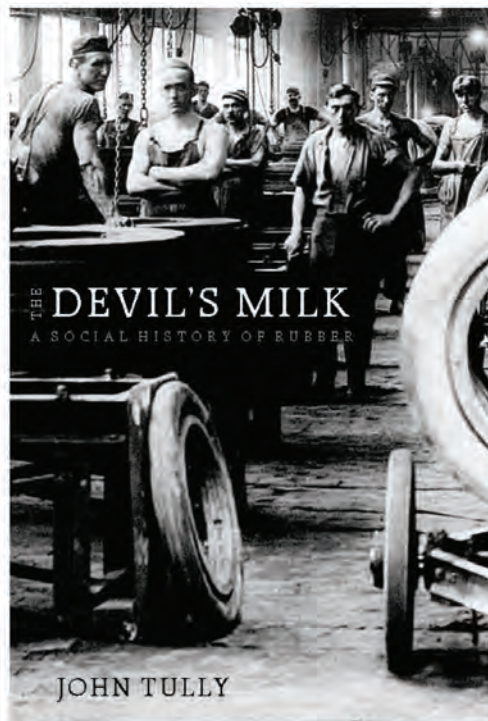
SATELLITE TV
Free Speech TV
DISH Network Ch. 9415/ DirecTV Ch. 348
8AM, Noon, 7PM, Midnight Mon-Fri

Link TV
Dish Network Ch. 9410/ DirecTV Ch. 375
11AM & 6PM Mon-Fri

DEMOCRACY NOW! EN ESPAÑOL
democracynow.org/es

DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG
Audio, Video, and Transcripts

DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG



THE DEVIL'S MILK

*a social
history
of rubber*

by John Tully

"A wonderfully fascinating social history of rubber's terrors (including slavery and Nazi extermination camps) and pleasures (condoms, among others). Tully is an insightful historian and he narrates this centuries-long account of a commodity as essential to the modern world as oil or steel with great passion and compassion."

—GREG GRANDIN, author, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*; professor of history, New York University

available now from
MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS
www.monthlyreview.org
800.670.9499
\$24.95 pbk | 468 pages

Why Nuclear Power Must Go

By CHRIS WILLIAMS

From the very beginning, unlocking the power of the atom for “peaceful” energy production was about waging war to its logical endpoint: the power to destroy life on a planetary scale.

People around the world were aghast at the apocalyptic destruction wreaked on Japan during a few hellish minutes when the United States dropped the nuclear bombs codenamed Little Boy and Fatman on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The immediate loss of life, in the tens of thousands, coupled with the invisible and long-term effects of radiation sickness and cancers, brought the world up against the sharp razor edge of the nuclear age.

Subsequently, during the Cold War, NATO’s nuclear war policy was officially named MAD: Mutually Assured Destruction, a point parodied in the outstanding black comedy *Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

If nuclear weapons were to have a future, perfecting them as the ultimate weapon of mass destruction needed a justification other than annihilating humans. Moreover, the plutonium typically used in fusion-based hydrogen bombs — hundreds and even thousands of times more destructive than an atom bomb — is not an element that occurs naturally on earth. It is a byproduct of fission, splitting uranium atoms to unleash and harness energy, that takes place inside nuclear reactors. Hence, without a nuclear power program, presented as the peaceful generation of unlimited, cheap and safe energy, it’s not possible to realistically produce the required amount of plutonium for nuclear weapons.

The first nuclear plants in the United Kingdom commissioned in the 1950s, at Calder Hall and Chapelcross, were explicitly for the production of plutonium for Britain’s nascent nuclear weapons program; generating electricity was a secondary consideration.

In 1954, Lewis Strauss, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, imagined a nuclear-powered paradise: “Our children will enjoy in their homes electrical energy too cheap to meter. ... It is not too much to expect that our children will know of great periodic regional famines in the world only as matters of history, will travel effortlessly over the seas and under them and through the air with a minimum of danger and at great speeds, and will experience a lifespan far longer than ours,

as disease yields and man comes to understand what causes him to age.”

HAMMER OF GOD

The interconnection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons is inescapable. Because nuclear weapons are designed to be the Hammer of God, the ultimate arbiter of power, any country that is under external threat will logically seek to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent, which was their stated benefit and contribution to “world peace.”

North Korea, following George Bush’s post-Sept. 11 declaration that it was a member of the “Axis of Evil,” concluded it needed to develop and test a nuclear weapon, which it realized with an underground nuclear detonation in October 2006. Iran, the second member of the reputed Axis (Saddam Hussein’s Iraq having been the third), has been under intense U.S. pressure for nearly a decade to abandon its civil nuclear power program despite having the legal right to pursue such a course.

Interestingly, thinly veiled threats that the United States or Israel may bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities are predicated on the links between military and civilian nuclear programs. This has been one of the main arguments of the anti-nuclear movement: that peaceful nuclear energy programs drive an ever-more terrifying arms race. Indeed, there are four nations with undeclared stockpiles of nuclear weapons developed from civil programs, and it is no coincidence that they are in some of the most militarized and dangerous areas of the world: Israel, Pakistan, India and North Korea.

THE NEXT FUKUSHIMA?

With the deepening calamity at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, there has been a great deal of focus on the possibility of other nuclear power accidents around the world.

According to a new report by the Union of Concerned Scientists cited by the *Christian Science Monitor*: “Nuclear plants in the United States last year experienced at least 14 ‘near misses,’ serious failures in which safety was jeopardized, at least in part, due to lapses in oversight and enforcement by U.S. nuclear safety regulators... While none of the safety problems harmed plant employees or the public, they occurred with alarming frequency — more than once a month — which is high for a mature industry.”

In the United States, 23 of the 104 opera-

tional nuclear reactors are built on the same 1960s design by the same company, General Electric, as the reactors at Fukushima. They have been recognized to have serious design faults since the 1970s and have been regularly retrofitted (patched up) to address design vulnerabilities that are routinely discovered and that could lead to a core breach and the release of radioactive isotopes.

Many plants sit on geologically active faults, in coastal locations or close to large sources of fresh water. The 36-year-old Indian Point nuclear power plant, located 35 miles from midtown Manhattan, has a history of safety problems and sits on two fault lines. The U.S. government has warned its citizens to stay at least 50 miles away from Fukushima, while Japan has limited the evacuation and exclusion zone to 12 miles. If Indian Point were ground zero, creating a 50-mile buffer — which the chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission recommended to Congress in case of an accident comparable to Fukushima — would mean evacuating and re-locating some 20 million people. Undertaking such a plan has been called a “fantasy,” and the agency in charge would be the Department of Homeland Security, which oversaw the government response to Hurricane Katrina’s pummeling of the Gulf Coast in 2005.

California has a 99.7 percent chance of being hit with a magnitude 6.7 earthquake or greater within the next 30 years. Nuclear plants in California with the same design as Fukushima’s are only built to withstand magnitude 7 to 7.5 quakes, while the one that hit Japan on March 11 was 9.0. We know a larger earthquake is possible because the 1906 earthquake that tore San Francisco apart measured 8.3. California would not be immune to a powerful tsunami such as the one responsible for the multiple meltdowns in Fukushima, and as crazy as it sounds, one nuclear power plant, the San Onofre facility located south of Los Angeles, is built right on the beach.

Instead of waiting for another devastating nuclear accident to occur in the United States rivaling the one at Three Mile Island in 1979, we need to push the government to abandon plans both to relicense old plants for another 20 years and build new ones.

CHAIN REACTION

Producing electricity by splitting apart uranium atoms is an inherently unstable process that can lead to a runaway nuclear reaction at any moment. The “controlled” chain reaction



and fail-safe devices, at least two containment vessels, an evacuation plan, measures to prevent radiation leaks, regular testing of workers and the surroundings and so on.

This instability at the heart of nuclear power, combined with long-lived and extremely toxic waste, leads to the second insurmountable issue: its expense.

BOONDOGGLE

The nuclear power industry knows it is an economic boondoggle, which is why it demands cast-iron guarantees of limited liability for accidents and huge government subsidies before considering construction of new plants. The Bush administration bestowed \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees on the industry, and the Obama administration doubled down with \$36 billion more.

Yet the nuclear industry is asking for \$100 billion more. It also requested an extension of tax credits without plant-size restrictions, an investment tax credit and a worker training and manufacturing tax credit, as well as reductions in tariffs on any imports of required materials and components.

Citibank, which has rarely met a risky investment it didn’t like, issued a report in 2009 that found little reason to cheer the industry. Titled “New Nuclear: The Economics Say No,” it noted, “the risks faced by developers [of new nuclear plants] ... are so large and variable that individually they could each bring even the largest utility company to its knees financially.”

The Price-Anderson Nuclear Indemnities Act, first passed in 1957 and last renewed in 2005, restricts any costs payable by utility companies in the event of a nuclear accident to \$12.6 billion. Anything above that amount — which would be easily exceeded by any major accident — is covered by the public.

A comprehensive 2003 report by MIT, “The Future of Nuclear Power,” outlined the huge obstacles to expanding nuclear power: “prospects for nuclear energy as an option are limited, the report finds, by four unresolved problems: high relative costs; perceived adverse safety, environmental, and health effects; potential security risks stemming from proliferation; and unresolved challenges in long-term management of nuclear wastes.”

A 2009 updated report mentions that the current support program is “not yet effective and needs to be improved,” referring to increased government subsidies. According to a report cited in *Scientific American*, the costs

to the taxpayer of building 100 new nuclear power plants, over the lifetime of the plants, over and above costs associated with alternatives if they had been pursued, comes to a staggering \$1.9–4.1 trillion. As nuclear plants are notorious for cost overruns, the higher figure is much more likely.

The MIT report also undermines one common pro-nuclear power argument favored by environmentalists such as George Monbiot: “At least it’s not coal.” The study states, “if more is not done, nuclear power will diminish as a practical and timely option for deployment at a scale that would constitute a material contribution to climate change risk mitigation.”

In short, without embarking on a frenzy of construction that surpasses the global programs of the 1970s and ‘80s, nuclear power cannot make a meaningful contribution to mitigating climate change. The International Atomic Energy Agency, whose mission is to promote nuclear power, is even more skeptical: “Nuclear power is not a near-term solution to the challenge of climate change. The need to immediately and dramatically reduce carbon emissions calls for approaches that can be implemented more quickly than building nuclear reactors.”

BLOWING IN THE WIND

Wind farms take only 18 months to come on line; nuclear plants typically take in excess of 10 years. The last nuclear power plant to come on line in the United States, at Watts Bar in Tennessee, took 23 years to build and cost \$6.9 billion. Numerous studies ranging from ones in the *Wall Street Journal* to independent energy analysts have put the cost of nuclear power at 12 to 20 cents per kilowatt hour. In contrast, those same studies put the cost of renewable energy at an average of 6 cents for the same output.

Governments around the world are not fond of nuclear power for its supposed environmental benefits or for its reliability, safety or economic superiority. Ruling elites want more nuclear power because of its connection to nuclear weapons production, the desire for Great Power status and the quest for energy independence.

There are many other reasons to phase out nuclear power, such as the growing mountain of long-term waste: the U.S. government proposes to sequester waste for 1 million years — five times as long as homo sapiens have existed. Other drawbacks include the persistent

and large cost overruns during construction, the astronomical expense of decommissioning of nuclear power plants, the heavily polluting and energy intensive mining and refining of nuclear fuel from uranium ore, the dangers of transporting nuclear fuel for reprocessing, the international trade in nuclear waste and the highly centralized nature of the power system which means, as Fukushima has demonstrated, if one facility goes down it takes out an enormous chunk of the electricity supply.

As nuclear plants have to be continuously operated as close to full capacity as possible to even come close to justifying their costs, they directly displace clean renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar. Like nuclear power, they are best suited for base-load supply, which means they supply the minimum power needed for a block of customers. In addition, if governments relicense nuclear plants for another 20 years and build new ones that operate for 60 years more, then there will be no “transition” to clean power until almost the end of this century.

It’s also a myth that nuclear power cannot be replaced by truly green energy. Many scientific studies show that it is possible to construct wind, solar, geothermal and tidal sources of energy that don’t generate radioactive waste, lead to resource wars, have low carbon footprints and don’t require massive amounts of farmland, energy and water, unlike agro-fuels such as corn-based ethanol. Furthermore, the technology already exists to tap these genuine renewable sources for all of our electrical needs. To be fair, it would take 20 to 30 years of intensive manufacturing, engineering and construction to build the necessary generation, transmission, storage and distribution systems.

Ultimately, the problem is social and political, not a matter of science and technology. In that regard, it’s not just Republicans, but Obama and the vast majority of Democrats who are in the pro-nuclear camp even in the face of catastrophe, and they steadfastly favor “clean” coal, more offshore oil drilling in the Gulf and the Arctic and increasing agro-fuel production. If we want a transition to a sane and clean energy policy, we will have to independently organize and fight for it.

Chris Williams is a professor of physics and chemistry at Pace University and author of Ecology and Socialism: Solutions to Capitalist Ecological Crisis.

Fallout! A Radioactive History



HANFORD NUCLEAR RESERVATION

A 560-square-mile tract of land, Hanford, Wa., was taken over by the federal government as part of the Manhattan Project in 1943. By the time production stopped in the 1980s, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation had produced most of the plutonium for the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Last year, researchers discovered nearly three times the amount of plutonium previously reported at the site. According to Robert Alvarez, a former Energy Department official, enough plutonium is buried at the site to create 1,800 Nagasaki-size bombs.

SELLAFIELD

The Windscale site (now known as Sellafield), located on the coast of the Irish Sea in Cumbria, England, was home to Britain’s first two nuclear reactors, the Windscale Piles, which were constructed in 1951 to produce plutonium and other materials for Britain’s nuclear weapons program. On Oct. 10, 1957, a failure to properly control the temperature of one of the nuclear reactors sparked a devastating fire, which caused clouds of radioactive gas to spew into the atmosphere. At the time, it was the world’s biggest nuclear disaster.

THREE MILE ISLAND

The partial core meltdown in Unit 2 of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station in Dauphin County, Pa., was the most significant accident in the history of the U.S. nuclear power industry. A pump supplying cooling water to the reactor unaccountably “tripped,” or shut down, on March 28, 1979. A chain reaction of equipment failures and operator mistakes followed. Before the damage was brought under control, nearly half of the reactor core had melted. The accident stopped the construction of new nuclear power plants throughout the United States to this day.

CHERNOBYL

The world’s worst nuclear disaster to date occurred on April 26, 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukraine when operators botched a safety test, resulting in an explosion and a fire that burned for 10 days. The fallout spread over tens of thousands of miles, driving more than a quarter of a million people permanently from their homes. While the U.N. estimated 4,000 people died as a result of the incident, a 2009 study by the New York Academy of Sciences puts the death toll from 1986 to 2004 at 985,000 worldwide.

URANIUM MINING

Mined uranium ore is normally processed by grinding it and then extracting the uranium through chemical leaching. The milling process yields a dry powder consisting of natural uranium, or “yellowcake.” Uranium is extremely toxic and presents serious environmental and health risks. Most of the uranium mining in the United States took place on Native-American reservations throughout Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona and was managed by the Department of Interior. Hundreds of abandoned mines have yet to be cleaned up and continue to contaminate groundwater and poison children.

NUCLEAR WASTE

More than 50 nuclear plants are planned or under construction in a dozen countries, which will create even more nuclear waste. While the United States has chosen a potential site — Yucca Mountain, located 100 miles from Las Vegas — construction has yet to begin. According to a January 2002 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board concluded that the scientific and technical basis for the DOE’s assessment of Yucca Mountain was “weak to moderate.” The Nuclear Information and Resource Service reports that the area is as “seismically active as the California Bay Area,” and that fractures in the rock of Yucca Mountain will allow the release of radioactive gases over time as nuclear waste decays

Haiti, a Nation in Fragments, Faces the Future

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHS
BY ISABEAU DOUCET

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — This tormented nation is about to anoint a new president, but the political leadership is as fragmented as the buildings that collapsed last January and still lie strewn over the capital. Haiti's social movements are as neglected as the country's decaying infrastructure. Everything from political alliances to street protests is for sale. People and organizations on the ground compete for — or are undermined by — NGO money that never provides for any cohesive structural change.

Fuel prices, for example, have jumped an unprecedented 33 percent in recent weeks. But since unions can't organize an effective strike of "tap taps" — the outlandishly colorful buses most Haitians use — it means locals are now paying double the previous price for transport.

Fourteen months after the earthquake that killed an estimated 300,000 people, Haiti has barely begun the transition from disaster relief to recovery. It needs a strong government with popular support to oversee big reconstruction contracts effectively. But the two presidential candidates who made it to the second round of voting on March 20 — compas musician Michel "Sweet Micky" Martelly and legal scholar and former First Lady Mirlande Manigat — have the support of no more than a fraction of the population or the Parliament.

Haiti's sovereignty has been outsourced and depends now on the life support system of the United Nations, NGOs, the U.S. government and the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission co-chaired by former President Bill Clinton.

Even as the tortuous electoral process comes to a climax, the country's two most famous former living leaders — twice-ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and ex-dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier — have returned from exile with offers to help. Both ghosts of Haiti's past have eschewed the political fray thus far, but everyone is wondering what kinds of movements and alliances will coalesce around each leader, and how the future government will attempt to court their supporters.

In a century of grotesque dictators, Duvalier father and son stood out for the brutality and avarice of their rule, which began in 1957. After fleeing to France in 1986, "President for Life" Baby Doc squandered his looted fortune on French villas, Ferraris and "couture shopping sprees," according to one report, before returning to Haiti this Jan. 17. He was escorted by former death squad leader Jodel Chamblain, who stands accused of massacring pro-democracy

activists, thwarting elections and participating in both coups against Aristide. Also flanking Baby Doc was a different sort of hired gun, former U.S. Congressman Bob Barr, who is "advising" him on how to access up to \$7.3 million frozen in Swiss bank accounts. Barr explained that

Duvalier only wants to use the money to "help alleviate the suffering of the Haitian people." Though a couple of hundred supporters thronged Baby Doc at the airport, his base is more of a fringe of nostalgic right-wingers (albeit some with powerful influences) than a democratic movement.

AFTER THE FLOOD

For his part, Aristide arrived in Haiti days before the March 20 poll. Twice ousted after being democratically elected, he returned after seven years of exile in South Africa and, as revealed by 13 separate WikiLeaks cables, a concerted U.S. campaign to block his return. Even at the last minute, President

It was not only groundbreaking for Haitian democracy, but helped inspire the mass movements that have propelled left-leaning governments to power across Latin America since the late 1990s.

Contrary to U.S. government intimations, Aristide's return did not derail the elections nor spark large demonstrations. Thousands welcomed him on the tarmac and his car had to navigate a sea of rapturous supporters who accompanied him all the way to his doorstep and eventually went home peacefully. Other than stating that "the exclusion of Lavalas from the election is the exclusion of the Haitian people" and "the problem is exclusion and the solution is inclusion" Aristide has kept quiet on the political future of Haiti, as has Jean-Claude Duvalier.

With a flawed first round of voting, delays in second round results and a final tally not due before April 16, the election is in a crisis with no obvious solu-

in the 2000 parliamentary election.

The first round of voting last Nov. 28 for president, the Chamber of Deputies and Senate was rife with allegations of fraud, ballot-box stuffing and poorly prepared voter rolls, and most candidates called for its annulment. Only 22.9 percent of the overall electorate cast ballots, dropping to 12 percent in the areas most affected by the earthquake. Even with this paltry turnout, more than 23 percent of votes were not counted by the CEP or found to be irregular. To salvage the process, Western powers dispatched an OAS mission to eliminate Jude Celestin, the candidate of the ruling party, who was seen by the United States as too close to outgoing President René Préval. Diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks revealed that the United States government had turned against Préval in recent years and did not support his candidate.

In late January, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton flew to Haiti to push all the political actors to accept the OAS recommendations. Washington also revoked the visas of a couple dozen government officials in Haiti from the ruling party, and threatened to suspend international aid. Préval never signed the document certifying the process, but instead made arrangements to issue a passport to Aristide, eliminating the final barrier to his return.

Election authorities, monitors and the United Nations declared the second round a success, but journalists and observers in Port-au-Prince reported a far lower turnout than the first round. The results have been delayed because of widespread irregularities and the CEP's admission that 14 percent of the tally sheets — even more than the first round — were "visibly fraudulent."

ZOMBIE ELECTION

Even more detrimental than electoral fraud is the exclusion of Lavalas and the most disenfranchised. Among those with the most at stake in rebuilding Haiti are the 70,000 to 150,000 people who have been dumped 10 miles north of Port-au-Prince in Camps Corail and Canaan on the barren floodplain between a deforested mountain and the polluted sea. They were lured from the city center with promises of education, healthcare and jobs in a South Korean-run apparel factory where wages are typically so low that workers are unable to feed their families. But those plans have been jettisoned, and there isn't so much as a marketplace where people can buy and sell food.

In Corail — often billed as the "model camp" — the voting center opened 90 minutes late during the first round and was shut by people protesting the fact that only 39 people were on voter lists. At Canaan, the illegitimate and more populous "squat-



JOY TO THE WORLD: Children in the Cite Soleil slum, a bastion of support for former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Barack Obama personally pressured South African President Jacob Zuma to stop Aristide, who was accompanied by actor and activist Danny Glover and Democracy Now!'s Amy Goodman.

Political histories aside, there is no constitutional provision that would bar the return of either leader. Haitians would like the international community to assist Haiti's weak and corrupt judicial system in bringing Baby Doc to trial for the thousands who were tortured and murdered during his 15 years in power, rather than conspiring to prevent Aristide from returning before elections from which his political party, Fanmi Lavalas, was excluded.

Lavalas — which means "flood" as well as "mass of the people" in Kreyòl — mobilized a remarkable popular movement that swept Aristide into the presidency in 1991.

Whether you speak to the elite, the business-savvy diaspora, street merchants or those living in camps for internally displaced, the only certainty is that, unless the results are annulled and new elections held that include Lavalas, Haiti will be run by a weak right-wing president leading a fractious government and a parliament dominated by members of the current government.

The legitimacy of this election has been in question since the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) banned Fanmi Lavalas from running, despite appeals from the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). Fanmi Lavalas, the last political party to enjoy genuine popular support, has won every election in which it participated by wide margins, including 75 percent of the vote and 90 percent of seats

ter” camp, more than 20 truckloads of U.N. troops and Haitian National Police were sent to pacify the disenfranchised.

“We could almost say there are no elections in this entire zone” said Etan Dupin an independent human rights monitor and editor of the newspaper, *Bri Kouri Nouvel Gaye*. He noted that on election day at the two camps, “There are more people in church than at the voting station.”

Corail and Canaan sit atop mass graves and next to the necropolis of Titanyen, the dumping ground for the Duvaliers’ victims and later for assassinated supporters of Aristide. Also buried in Titanyen are hundreds of thousands of quake victims. At dusk on any given day you can see the corpses of cholera victims being tossed into the cavernous pits. People in the camps took to calling the first round of elections “eleksyon Zombi” because many of the dead in Titanyen are still on voter lists, but those barely living on top of the graves are not.

PACKAGING THE VOTE

Presidential candidate Michel Martelly cast his ballot in Petionville, the hillside suburb of Port-au-Prince where many of Haiti’s elite reside. More people were dressed in his campaign color of pink, waving his posters and throwing confetti than were queuing to vote. Campaigning on election day is a violation of the electoral law, but it went unhindered. Esaie Geline Jules, an election monitor, said, “All the people in Petionville didn’t go to participate in the elections, but went to participate in a day of Carnival.” The first carnival since the earthquake was a boon to the campaign of Martelly. But despite the cheering supporters, that voting station opened two hours late, and the line had dissipated two and a half hours before the polls closed.

Martelly faced off against Mirlande Manigat, the 70-year-old former First Lady and Haiti’s foremost constitutional scholar. Though Manigat won a plurality in the first round, she lost momentum as she stayed silent during the wrangling over who would be declared the runner-up. Her campaign was not as tech-savvy, youth-focused or rousing as Martelly’s, which hired a Spanish communications company that promised Obama-esque “change” and specializes in packaging right-wing candidates such as John McCain in 2008 and Mexico’s Felipe Calderone in 2006.

Despite Martelly’s past alliances with the forces that overthrew Aristide and massacred thousands of Lavalas supporters, and his “patriotic” support of both coup d’etats, many of his poor backers see no contradiction between their desire for Martelly as president and their love of Aristide.

Martelly and Manigat may differ in age, gender manners and mores, but their political differences are more cosmetic than ideological. Both are right wing and spoke of restoring the army, and possibly setting a timetable for the withdrawal of the U.N. peacekeeping forces that have occupied Haiti since U.S., Canadian and French troops handed the mission over five months after Aristide’s second ouster in 2004.



TOP: A young recruit in the would-be Haitian army stands in a changing room with a portrait of revolutionary leader Henri Christophe and the Duvalier party red-and-black flag behind him.

MIDDLE: A Carnival float in the Southern town of Jacmel calls attention to U.N. forces that have been occupying Haiti for nearly seven years.

BOTTOM: A year after Haiti’s earthquake, collapsed buildings like this are still strewn around Port-Au-Prince.

After Aristide was restored as president in 1994 following the first coup, he issued a decree to demobilize the army that had overthrown him. Former soldiers formed the paramilitary death squads that massacred Aristide supporters before and after the second coup, and threatened to topple Aristide before he was forced into exile.

Since his second ouster, the country has had a permanent U.N. military force that has been implicated in killing civilians. The possibility that U.N. forces brought the cholera epidemic, which has now killed almost 5,000 people since October, has amplified long-standing grievances that the blue helmets are an occupation force that does little to protect civilians while taking away much-needed employment.

RE-BOOT CAMP

For over a year, on a hillside south of Port-au-Prince, around 100 former soldiers and young recruits train three times a week. They claim to have a network of camps all over the country where Haitian men meet and exercise, learn military protocol and martial arts and receive basic training. They have a doctor and a dentist, and hand out used T-shirts with handmade logos for Haiti’s demobilized armed forces. The black-and-red flag of Jean-Claude Duvalier’s party hangs in their tarpaulin dressing room flanked by old paintings of the liberated slave republic’s founding fathers Henri Christophe and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Somebody is paying for this, even though they claim that it’s all-volunteer, and the current government is turning a blind eye, if not giving tacit support.

It’s not difficult to see how young people frustrated with the U.N. troops and in need of work and a sense of patriotism would see a future in an army career, but the Haitian army of the past was created and formed by the U.S. Marines who occupied Haiti in the early 20th century. It was set up to oppress Haitians and later became the agent, with U.S. backing, for toppling democratically elected governments.

Though Aristide is still the most popular political figure in Haiti, the constitution bars him from a third term, and Fanmi Lavalas has yet to remobilize. It’s believed the party is planning to organize at the neighborhood and community level with an eye toward the 2016 presidential contest.

Whoever takes office in the next month might not last five years, given the lack of popular support, the sense of exclusion, the deep divisions within the government and the popular political will.

With all the reconstruction money hanging in the balance, a delegitimized electoral process and a cholera-soaked rainy season ahead, Haiti might face more of the same protracted political crises that left it in shambles even before the devastating earthquake.

Isabeau Doucet is a producer for Al Jazeera and writes for The Guardian and The Christian Science Monitor.

MOROCCO: Can Dinosaurs Become Butterflies?

BY STUART SCHAAR

RABAT, Morocco—Faced with a growing pro-democracy movement, King Mohamed VI of Morocco surprised many on March 9 when he declared in a nationally televised speech that he was willing to trim his powers and become a constitutional monarch. Toward this end, he named an 18-member commission to reform the constitution headed by the respected jurist and professor of law at Rabat's Mohamed V University Abdelatif Menouni. The king asked Menouni to submit a report to him by June outlining changes to be voted on in a popular referendum later this year.

Among the reforms announced by Mohamed VI were future elections for prime minister and regional governors instead of palace appointments; elevating Amazigh identity (as the often-discriminated-against Berbers are known here) as a core element of the nation's overall identity; and transforming the judiciary into an independent branch of the government.

M6, as the king is popularly called in this Northwest African nation of 35 million people, also spoke of "boosting moral integ-

riety in public life," referring to widespread government corruption. He appointed a close advisor to head another commission to gather suggestions for constitutional reform from political party leaders, trade unionists, NGOs and the potent youth movement that has organized mass demonstrations as part of the ongoing democratic uprising in North Africa and the Middle East.

While the king's actions are more than the political elite expected, they were not enough for some reformers and many young activists.

Abdoubakr Jamaï, former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct *Journal Hebdomadaire*, told Voice of America that for many in the democratic movement the king's speech was ambiguous "because he claims that Morocco will usher in an era of democratization with the institution of a constitutional monarchy, with a prime minister who will be designated from the winning party in parliamentary elections, with separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, etc. The problem with all these things is that we were supposed to have them before."

In his speech, Mohammed VI skirted mention of nationwide demonstrations organized by the February 20 movement on that day.

Organizers claimed they mobilized 300,000 people in 53 cities and towns, while the government put numbers at 37,000. In the capital of Rabat, the turnout was 5,000 at most, modest by Moroccan standards. In recent decades, more than one million Moroccans have rallied in support of Palestinians, around one million turned out for an Islamist demonstration against family reform, and some 300,000 showed up when secularists pushed for women's rights. Several political parties such as the "moderate" Islamist party, the Party for Justice and Development (PJD), and the Party of Progress and Socialism, the successor to the banned Communist Party, did not participate.

The minister of interior denounced the protests before and after they took place. During the Tunisian Revolution in January, the minister twice refused to grant permits for demonstrations in front of the Tunisian embassy in Rabat. However, after Egyptians forced out President Hosni Mubarak in February, hundreds of Moroccans demonstrated in Rabat's city center. The Interior Ministry, a stronghold of anti-reform elements, told them they could protest, but they could not call for regime change in Morocco.

Demonstrators on Feb. 20 called for lower food prices, more jobs and constitutional reform, such as limiting the king's power and elections for the prime minister. Most protests remained calm, but violence erupted in several cities as a few hundred young people in each place broke off from the main demonstrations, setting fire to banks (with five deaths in Al Hoceima) and trashing gasoline stations, as well as a McDonald's and a Spanish department store in Marrakech.

Poor youth vented their anger over the large class divisions in a country with an annual per capita income of less than \$2,800, high youth unemployment and an adult illiteracy rate of 44 percent. (The official unemployment rate is around 9 percent, and the real unemployment rate may be double that.)

Oussama El Khelifi, a leader of the February 20 movement, has explained that about 50 men and women in their late teens and 20s, inspired by Tunisia's Jasmine revolution, created a Facebook group on Jan. 11. It soon mushroomed into a movement of 20,000 youth discussing politics, social justice, poverty and corruption and advocating democratization of the regime. Youth

» At the end of May **THE AUDACITY OF HOPE** will join the 2nd International Freedom Flotilla sailing to Gaza. This U.S. flagged ship will be one of 12 boats with people from 22 nations — unified in our call for an end to the Israeli siege and blockade of Gaza.

» YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS HISTORIC EFFORT.

- Make a donation today! Use our secure online payment system at www.ustogaza.org, or mail a check to **STAND FOR JUSTICE FOUNDATION** at PO Box 373, Bearsville, NY 12409.

- Purchase our t-shirt and wear it as a public show of your support for our boat, **THE AUDACITY OF HOPE**. Order today from our website: www.ustogaze.org

- Participate in **TO GAZA WITH LOVE**, our campaign to bring thousands of letters from the people of this country to the people of Gaza. This precious cargo will be brought on our boat. More information is available on our website.

- Stay informed and involved: go our website to sign up for our email alerts, join us on Facebook and Twitter!

- Join our emergency response network and be prepared to take action when the flotilla is underway.

» **U.S. BOAT TO GAZA**

www.ustogaza.org | www.facebook.com/USBOATTOGAZA | twitter.com/usboattogaza

SUPPORT THE
U.S. BOAT TO GAZA
THE AUDACITY OF HOPE
www.ustogaza.org

unemployment, the lack of decent housing, poor healthcare and growing inequalities surfaced as major issues in need of redress.

Many youth look to the 47-year-old king, who is seen as responsive to younger generations, to initiate the country's reforms. After initially denouncing the youth movement before Feb. 20, Mohamed VI changed course, siding with liberal elements in his entourage who convinced him to initiate fundamental changes before the monarchy was pushed aside by a mass revolutionary movement.

Meanwhile, young people have continued to organize on the internet and have held demonstrations throughout Morocco in March to pressure the state to initiate reforms rapidly. Continuing daily peaceful protests and sit-ins by university professors, high school students, Saharan employees and unemployed professionals allow them to let off steam and present their demands.

JOB AND BREAD

Last December, in response to rumblings in Tunisia, the state boosted police pay by up to 60 percent and added new benefits, hoping to ensure their loyalty. The Ministry of Finance later declared that 10 percent of the 2011 budget would be allocated for job creation.

The former minister of finance had in the past told me that he could not create any state jobs because of opposition from the United States, the World Bank and IMF. He added that he had no discretionary funds after paying the salaries of the top-heavy state bureaucracy.

Once the protest movement grew into a major force, however, the Moroccan government said it would create more than 4,000 state jobs in an attempt to placate thousands of young unemployed professionals who have demonstrated daily outside the parliament for years. Immediately, some 7,000 more Moroccans showed up from among the vast army of un- and underemployed.

Morocco has not been successful in creating jobs over the years due to structural factors such as sparse state funds for jobs spending, the reluctance of Moroccan capital to invest in labor-intensive industries and a poor education system that barely trains potential workers for the jobs that do exist. Foreign investment is limited because Morocco inherited progressive labor legislation from the colonial period. Workers with contracts have good benefits and decent salaries, making their labor much more expensive than workers in China or India.

On March 1 the government increased subsidies on staples such as bread and olive oil to address inflation. While the lack of jobs and the rising cost of living need to be tackled, the youthful protesters, as is the case elsewhere in the Arab world, see the need for political reforms as well.

Morocco is also burdened by the billions of dollars spent on the conflict in the resource-rich Western Sahara, which it entered with the "Green March" in 1975. A war against the Algerian-backed Polisario Front has largely become a political conflict since a 1991 cease-fire. Morocco previously stated that it was increasing its military budget by 25 percent to counter Algeria's growing military budget, which is being fed



by rising oil and gas revenues. The United States supplies both countries in a growing arms race.

PALACE INTRIGUE

The Moroccan monarchy concentrates most power in the Makhzen, the palace bureaucracy surrounding King Mohammed VI. Since succeeding his iron-fisted father, King Hassan II, in 1999, M6 has liberalized the political system to the point that the press is relatively free. Certain subjects are off limits, however: no criticism of the king, the army, or state policy toward Western Sahara is allowed. That still leaves a lot of room to speak about corruption, which exists at every level of the state apparatus.

A December 2009 U.S. State Department cable released by WikiLeaks described "the appalling greed of those close to King Mohammed VI." It singled out the palace's use of "major institutions and processes of the Moroccan state ... to coerce and solicit bribes in the country's real estate sector."

Unemployed college graduates have organized an association that demonstrates daily in front of the parliament in Rabat. For the past two years, they have begun to block

traffic through the city center. About six months ago I witnessed something remarkable. The police were called in to push the demonstrators out of traffic. A police captain was about to hit a protestor with a truncheon when the crowd at hand started hissing loudly. The captain froze, put his arm around the man and walked him to the sidewalk, while gently asking him to go home. The crowd represents a popular force, since most people no longer accept the brutal police tactics used by King Hassan II.

Many other associations have formed. Women's groups have proliferated, pressing demands for further liberties. A new family law was instituted that gave women greater rights. Human rights organizations, free from state controls, branches of Transparency International, and other NGOs exist and criticize shortcomings in the regime. The press freely reports their findings.

Much more needs to be done to lessen the king's monopoly on power and the economy. However, Moroccans suffered through nearly 40 years of heavy-handed dictatorship under Hassan II and are relieved that repression has abated and they can now express themselves somewhat. Class tensions are high, with rich

people living in Beverly Hills-like luxury and masses of people in poverty. M6 is trying to reduce the long-standing animosity between Arabs and Berbers, the original inhabitants of North Africa before the Arab conquest and a substantial part of the population. Most army officers are Berber, so a military takeover of Morocco would frighten the Arab majority.

There are also Islamist movements, the largest of which, al-Adl Waal-Ihssane, is illegal but ever present underground. In demonstrations March 20, the youth wing of this movement led the march and protected property to avoid any violence. The legal Islamist party, the PJD, has a block of deputies in Parliament, but no members in the coalition government. The king has initiated a policy of supporting traditional Sufi (mystical) brotherhoods to try to reduce support for Islamism. The PJD program offers no solutions to economic problems, focusing instead on moral issues.

NURTURING DEMOCRACY

Few Moroccans want to embark on the Tunisian model for fear of unknown consequences. The question remains whether a traditional monarchy can meet the demands of thousands of unemployed graduates and a large mass of impoverished and illiterate people in a society marked by wide class divisions.

The political class has no constituency-based offices. Once elected, parliamentarians are far more loyal to their respective parties than the people, but opportunism is rampant. None have community offices to serve the people, and more than 100 have switched parties since the last elections. Most of them moved to a new party founded by a friend of the king, creating major shifts in political loyalties and discrediting the political system in the minds of voters. Only 37 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in the last parliamentary elections.

Democracy cannot be implanted overnight where authoritarian structures exist throughout society. Families remain patriarchal with fathers in charge. *Zaims*, charismatic leaders, dominate local and national politics. Revitalized brotherhoods maintain master-disciple dichotomies with masters demanding blind obedience from adepts. Local notables expect gifts and obedience from underlings. Those structures have been in place for centuries and will not go away because of constitutional reforms.

No one, including the youth, is addressing these structural manifestations of authoritarianism in Morocco. The reform movement is the first stage in a long process to change social relations. Tradition will not evaporate, and it will present an ongoing obstacle to the urban-based reform movement.

Ali Bouabid, the son of one of the founders of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, best summed up the political crisis facing Morocco when he asked if party leaders were ready for democracy. In other words, can Moroccan dinosaurs become butterflies under the pressure of a growing mass youth movement?

Stuart Schaar is professor emeritus of Middle East and North African history, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and co-author of The Middle East and Islamic World Reader. He lives and teaches in Rabat, Morocco.

Stardust Memories

Nostalgia for the Light (2010)
DIRECTED BY PATRICIO GUZMÁN
RELEASED BY ICARUS FILMS
SCREENING AT BAM ROSE CINEMAS,
APRIL 6; CURRENTLY PLAYING AT
IFC CENTER

Perhaps Werner Herzog's Antartica-set *Encounters at the End of the World* (2007) is the only recent film that matches *Nostalgia for the Light* in exploring the unlikely crossroads of scientific and spiritual pursuit in one of our planet's most remote, barren regions. Whereas Herzog gives a quixotic thrust to global ecological concerns, Patricio Guzmán extends the national historical burden of Chile, which he has documented over the past four decades, into the far reaches of the cosmos.

Nowhere on Earth is the soil drier — comparable to the surface of Mars, as Guzmán's narration in the film details — and the sky more translucent than in the Atacama desert. Consequently, this inhospitable area has long been a research destination for archaeologists and astronomers alike, with both

searching for the past in opposite directions. Guzmán dissolves the philosophical paradox between the dimensions of space and time into a question of perception (the cinema's audiovisual parameters).

Based on his mastery of volume and scale, *Nostalgia's* brilliant manipulation of sound perspective dovetails with its multiple *trompe l'oeil* effects (the blending of the desert's texture and hue with that of a 10,000-year-old mummy's skeleton, of celestial bodies'

How ironic, then, that life cycles of stars and pre-Colombian rock drawings are of more interest in Chile than its recent history. Miguel, a survivor of the Pinochet regime, was detained in five different concentration camps, managing to measure — without instruments — and memorize the layout of these complexes with enough precision to create stunningly accurate drawings of camp life. Guzmán describes the bond between Miguel and his wife Anita, who suffers from Alzheimer's, as a metaphor for Chile's ambivalent relationship to its past.

The film's inspiration and prime custodians of remembrance are the handful of women venturing out into the Atacama day after day to scrape the ground with

little spades. They are searching for traces of lost relatives who were among the many thousands of Chileans massacred and buried in the desert, then dug up and dumped in undisclosed locations. Even though the establishment disparages their efforts, these women are still determined to exhume their dead and properly mourn

them. Seventy-year-old Violeta wishes the observatory's instruments could look deep into the earth so that she and her companions could thank the stars for recovering their loved ones.

Violeta's wish finds affirmation, if not fulfillment, when she and her fellow seeker Victoria are invited by Gaspar to marvel at the beauty of the firmament through one of the telescopes. Guzmán tactfully refrains from letting us share their observations and hear their joyous reactions, choosing instead to present the scene as if it were un-

folding in an alternate universe.

A work of rare poetic vision and insight, *Nostalgia for the Light* finds in the Chilean passion for astronomy a potential act of resistance, inspired by the responsibility to bring to light the legacy of the disappeared, who, as Pinochet's reign of institutionalized terror recedes into an ever more distant past, continue to lie buried under its yoke.

—KENNETH CRAB



Nostalgia for the Light (2010). Courtesy of BAMcinémathèque/Icarus Films.

shapes and surface patterns with those of marbles from the filmmaker's childhood) to collapse any objective, distance-based separation of present and past. Gaspar, a young astronomer working at the Atacama observatory, even asserts that the present doesn't exist, except as a state of consciousness — a living memory of the past.

FROM ALLENDE TO PINOCHET IN FOUR FILMS

Few films have been more lived by those making them than the three-part, four-and-a-half-hour *The Battle of Chile* (1973–1979), a monumental work of journalistic activism and the centerpiece of BAM's week-long retrospective of Patricio Guzmán's oeuvre, from April 1 to 7.

Parts One and Two of *The Battle of Chile* unravel how reactionary forces attempted to sabotage the commitment to nonviolent social reform on the part of President Salvador Allende's Popular Front government and the Chilean working class during the six months leading up to the military coup d'état of Sept. 11, 1973. Part Three details the workers' triumphant organization through people's stores, industrial belts and community commandos to ward off a U.S.-sponsored takeover by the

bourgeoisie and the right.

After Guzmán had his reels smuggled out of the country and finished the film in exile, it remained unseen in Chile until he took a print with him to make *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (1997), which mournfully reconnects survivors to a past that was brutally taken away from them. *The Pinochet Case* (2001) balances the legal machinations of the attempted prosecution of the ex-dictator on charges of torture with witnesses' very personal and emotional accounts of pain and loss. With *Salvador Allende* (2004), Guzmán shatters the silence of censorship that still envelops the life and legacy of a leader whose love affair with the Chilean people was based on making their dream of a just society come true.

—Kenneth Crab



be the E

Be the change
you want to see
in the world....

Mahatma Gandhi



Earth Day 2011 Events at Grand Central Terminal and Times Square

Be the E Inside GCT

Thursday - Saturday, April 21-23, 2011
Exhibits & Special Screenings
in Vanderbilt Hall

Be the E Outside GCT

Friday - Saturday, April 22-23, 2011
Earth Fair Exhibits, Entertainment & Art
Vanderbilt Ave between 42nd & 45th

Be the E in Times Square

Friday, April 22, 2011
Exhibits & CO₂ E Drive,
a Green Vehicle Fashion Show

To get involved:

earthdayny.org

info@earthdayny.org

212 922 0165



For more information about Eday events and educational programs, please visit earthdayny.org

Collecting Counter-Narratives

Capital and Its Discontents: Conversations with Radical Thinkers in a Time of Tumult
PM PRESS, 2011
EDITED BY SASHA LILLEY

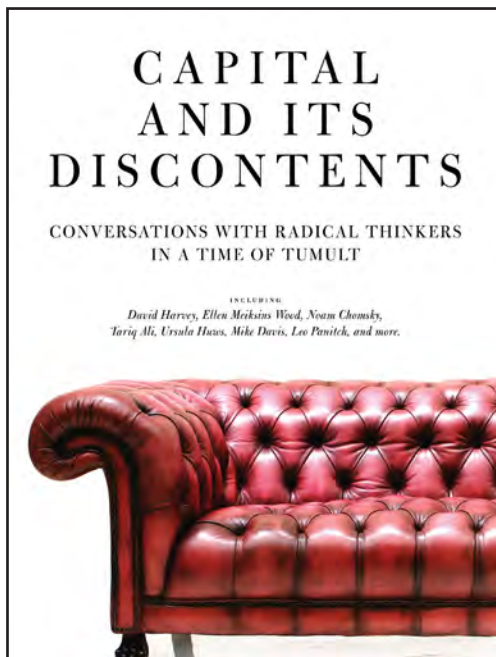
If the North American left is good at anything, it's being discontented. And if the collapse of the left as an effective political force over recent decades has amplified our discontent, it's also forced some radical thinkers to dig in and do the hard work of analyzing society. This section of the left is mainly (though not exclusively) based in academia and grounded in a broad Marxist tradition. Beyond fostering mere discontent, though, their aim is to increase our understanding of how the regime of capital shapes our everyday existence, how this has come to be historically and how things might be different. And in this moment of political disorientation — from illusions in the Democratic Party to the rejection of universal, emancipatory politics — we could stand to hear what they have to say.

Indeed, some of us have heard them on programs like KPFA's *Against the Grain* (ATG). But with the publication of this book,

edited by ATG host Sasha Lilley and largely drawn from her interviews, many more will have the chance to absorb these crucial arguments. *Capital and Its Discontents: Conversations with Radical Thinkers in a Time of Tumult* is by no means comprehensive (nor does it claim to be), but it does offer a fine selection of the left's most lucid thinking, principally around questions of political economy.

The value of this book lies in its accessibility. Because each short chapter is a conversation between Lilley and her guest, key points are presented quickly, clearly and in a language that is comprehensible. In this sense, *Capital and Its Discontents* is the perfect book for liberals and leftists who want to move beyond superficial criticism of bad policies and greedy corporate executives and toward a structural critique of capitalism and imperialism. It's

also the perfect book for those who don't have the time or inclination to pore over everything published by these 17 contributors, but want



to gain a general sense of what the left intelligentsia is up to.

The book is arranged into three sections: "Empire, Neoliberalism, Crisis"; "Commodification, Enclosure, and the Contradictions of

Capitalism"; and "Alternatives?" I won't describe every interview, but it's fair to say that there isn't a weak one in the bunch. The first section begins with a solid one-two punch of Ellen Meiksins Wood and David Harvey, with the former tackling basic questions like the nature of historical capitalism and forms of empire and the latter tracing the rise of neoliberalism. Subsequent contributors situate the 2008 financial crisis within a broader crisis of capitalism that has its roots in a decades-long repression of wages, the vast expansion of debt (household and commercial) and the spectacular growth of the financial sector. The lesson here is that the current problems of capitalism are not the result of mismanagement — they have a long history arising from the inherent contradictions of a system based upon ceaseless growth and the relentless pursuit of profits above all else.

Section two explores what Lilley, in her substantial introduction, suggests is a unifying theme of the book: capital's drive to commodify all aspects of our lives. John Bellamy Foster and Jason W. Moore describe what this means from an ecological standpoint, and Ursula Huws explains how

the commodification of unpaid, mostly female, domestic labor provides the underpinnings of the modern service sector. Contributors to section three consider alternatives to the current order and touch on the complex history of state-led "national capitalism," the legacy of the Soviet Union, the New Left's relationship to post-modernism and anarchist visions of how to organize society.

The question of "Alternatives?" is a major one, and Lilley often concludes an interview by asking how we can rebuild the left into a force capable of challenging capital. Though responses vary, they all emphasize the need to educate people with a systemic critique of capitalism and the need to build left unity. *Capital and Its Discontents* is itself a major contribution toward that first goal and explicitly argues that we move toward the second through renewed cooperation between anarchists and socialists, a notion that I second. But how we get there, and how we shape our discontent into an effective anti-capitalist movement, is the biggest question of all.

—SCOTT BORCHERT

REVOLT AND CRISIS

IN GREECE

FROM OCCUPIED LONDON AND AK PRESS

APRIL 2011
ISBN: 9780983059714
378 PAGES \$18

HOW DOES A REVOLT COME ABOUT AND WHAT DOES IT LEAVE BEHIND? WHAT IMPACT DOES IT HAVE ON THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN IT AND THOSE WHO SIMPLY WATCH IT? IS THE GREEK REVOLT OF DECEMBER 2008 CONFINED TO THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, OR ARE THERE LESSONS WE CAN BRING TO BEAR ON SOCIAL ACTION AROUND THE GLOBE?

PRE-ORDER AT AKPRESS.ORG AND GET 25% OFF LIST PRICE!

REVOLUTION BY THE BOOK

AK PRESS PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION * OAKLAND, EDINBURGH, BALTIMORE

PEOPLES' VOICE

Apr 16:
The Ray Korona Band

Apr 30:
Magpie; Marie Mularczyk O'Connell and Friends

May 7:
Sally Campbell; Bruce Markow

May 14:
*Raise Your Banners!;
Songs of Struggle Throughout the Ages*

May 21:
New York City Labor Chorus

★ SATURDAYS AT 8 P.M. ★

Community Church of New York Unitarian-Universalist
40 E. 35th St. (Madison/Park)
New York, NY 10016

doors open 7:30; space is accessible

212-787-3903

www.peoplesvoicecafe.org

The Upheaval of History

"The Great Upheaval: Modern Art from the Guggenheim Collection, 1910–1918"

THE GUGGENHEIM
1071 FIFTH AVE.
THROUGH JUNE 1

"Geometric Days"

EXIT ART
475 TENTH AVE.
THROUGH APRIL 30

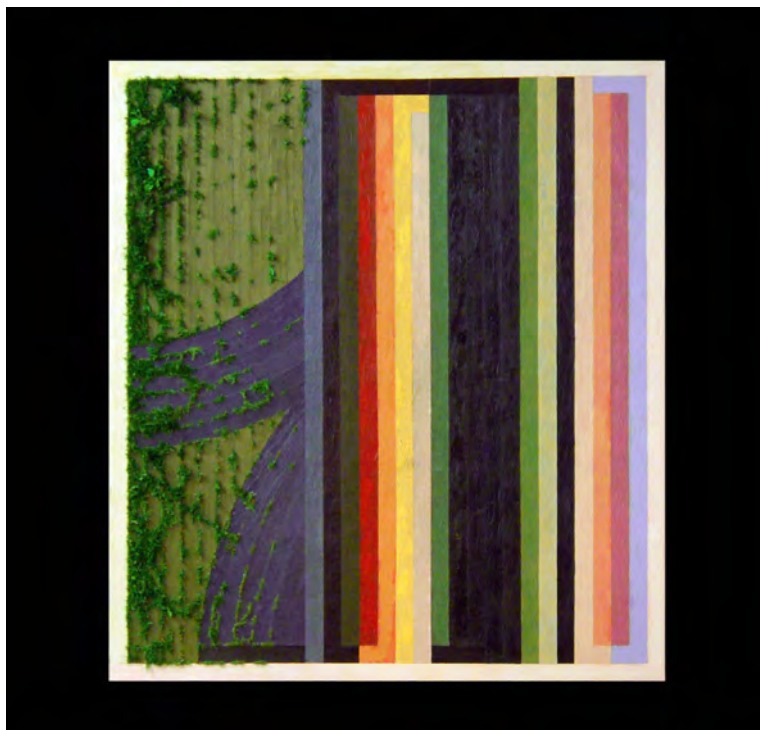
Some would say that history is always perilous — but we can tell that the 20th century was one of the most tumultuous times the human race has ever endured for one reason: art. If we accept that the arts are, to paraphrase literary scholar Ernestine Schlant, a "seismograph of a people's unconscious," then the last century has been a raging, tempestuous clatter (of the unconscious, anyway).

The power of art as historical record is the undergirding theme of "The Great Upheaval," an exhibit currently on view at the Guggenheim (a 20th-century cultural landmark). The show, drawn from the museum's vast holdings of early 20th-century modernism, tracks the avant-garde in painting and sculpture from 1910 to 1918, a period of conflict, innovation and

revolution throughout the world. The work on view doesn't address these issues directly — that doesn't seem to be what fine artists did back then — but there is certainly some kind of momentum at work: half-seen forces propelling the art, and the world, forward.

Robert Delaunay's cubist-ish paintings of the Eiffel Tower from 1910 to 1912 show the modern monument in simultaneous construction and collapse. František Kupka's *Planes by Colors, Large Nude* (1909–10) shows a reclining female figure painted in bright, sickly swaths of pure color; the work imbues painterly abstraction with the raw look of X-ray photography, a relatively new discovery at the time. Luigi Russolo's *Solidity of Fog* (1912) shows dark figures disarrayed by a floating beacon of white light. The painting looks like a horror show of life during wartime, but it was probably meant to convey something more joyful: an exploration of that exciting new technology, the electric streetlight.

Abstract painting is no longer the be-all end-all it once was, but its appeal to emerging artists has never ceased. Currently, the approach is going through a phase of renewed interest in the art world and, yes, hipness. Exit Art's exhibit "Geometric Days" seeks to



Charles Koegel, *Who Knows* (2010), Courtesy of the Artist and Slate Gallery.

explore the complex social dimensions of geometric form. Most of the art here was created in the last few years — about 100 years after some of the best work in "The Great Upheaval." Whereas the

early modernists stuck with established methods of unified, top-down composition, these newer artists engage in a sort of creative myopia: many of these paintings feel like blown-up details, depict-

ing mere fragments of a large and unfathomable whole (microscopy seems to have been a guiding theme of "Geometric Days," but I'd say that a similar sensibility can be found in a lot of recent abstract art).

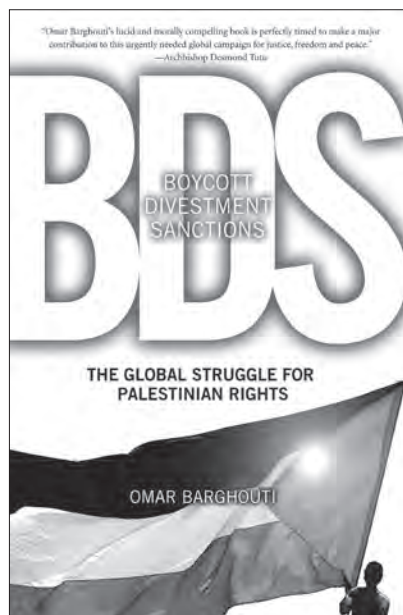
The pressed, jostled forms of Nathalie Provosty's *Telluric and Magnetic III* (2011) suggests old-fashioned melancholia while still hinting at a bigger picture outside the frame. In paintings like *Structures of Possibility* (2011), Dannielle Tegeder's sudden, edgy shapes are split across multiple canvases, creating a permanent and deliberate imbalance. The exhibit as a whole is also imbued with a feeling of resignation. Charles Koegel's *Who Knows* (2010) gives us actual-size sprawl and real-looking dilapidation: it's a simple striped painting with grass on it. Rico Gatson's *Mystery Object #3* (2011) looks like an obsolete industrial heater.

Foregoing the boldness of 20th-century modernism, the work in "Geometric Days" feels unsure by design, an apt expression of our non-heroic modern moment. Perhaps it's just cold comfort, but the history of our mounting uncertainty will do well to be written by artists.

—MIKE NEWTON

"Omar Barghouti's lucid and morally compelling book is perfectly timed to make a major contribution to this urgently needed global campaign for justice, freedom and peace."
—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"Barghouti reminds us what public responsibility entails, and we are lucky to have his relentless and intelligent analysis and argument."
—Judith Butler



BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT SANCTIONS

The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights • Omar Barghouti

"Barghouti explains...that bringing an end to apartheid in Palestine and seeing justice and equality for all the people who live there is not a distant dream but a reality we can bring about in the next few years using BDS." —Ali Abunimah, author of *One Country*

Order online from www.HaymarketBooks.org



Watch GRITtv at 8PM and 9AM on MNN Channel 34



HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

NYC CONFERENCE

Mimi Abramovitz—Kevin Anderson—Stanley Aronowitz—Cinzia Arruzza—Abigail Bakan—Cara Baldwin—Gopal Balakrishnan—Aaron Bananev—Banu Bargu—Joel Beinin—Karl Beitel—Deepankar Basu—Snehashish Bhattacharya—Werner Bonefeld—Craig Borowiak—Chiara Bottici—Aaron Brenner—Rose Brewer—Andrew Brown—Alex Callinicos—Lindsay Caplan—Paresh Chattopadhyay—Chris Chitty—John Clegg—Joshua Clover—Alex Day—Mladen Dolar—Paulo dos Santos—Gérard Duménil—Gary Dymksi—Hester Eisenstein—Elizabeth Esch—Molly Fair—Sara R. Farris—Francis Feeley—Kevin Floyd—Harrison Fluss—Alan Freeman—Loren Goldner—Anastasia Gomes—Maya Gonzalez—Dara Greenwald—Andrej Grubic—Bruno Gulli—Stefano Harney—David Harvey—Nader Hasan—Stephen Healy—Emma Heaney—Doug Henwood—Nancy Holmstrom—Homa Hoodfar—Matt Huber—Ho-fung Hung—Miranda Joseph—Rebecca Karl—Cindi Katz—Atle Mikkola Kjosén—Andrew Kliman—Sabu Kohso—Reid Kotlas—Joel Kovel—Grace Kpohazounde—Peter Kulchyski—Madeline McDonald Lane—Lauren Langman—Neil Larsen—Genevieve LeBaron—Zach Lockman—Eric Lott—Matteo Mandarini—Robyn Marasco—Laura Renata Martin—Randy Martin—Wendy Matsumura—Annie McClanahan—Geoffrey McDonald—Olive McKeon—Kyle McKinley—David McNally—Alessandra Mezzadri—Alan Milchman—Simon Mohun—Gary Mongiovi—Patrick Murray—Justin Myers—Peterson Nnaji—Bertell Ollman—Shiri Pasternak—Marianna Pavlovskaya—René Francisco Poitevin—Charles Post—Vijay Prashad—Jason Read—Jan Rehmann—Sébastien Rioux—William Clare Roberts—Mary Robertson—Maliha Safri—Jeanne Schuler—Alan Sears—Guillermina Seri—Beverly Silver—Alan Smart—Stuart W. Smithers—Hae-Yung Song—Marcel Stoetzler—Sarah Swider—William Tabb—Neferti Tadiar—Peter Thomas—Oxana Timofeeva—Massimiliano Tomba—Dale Tomich—Alberto Toscano—Zhivka Valiavicharska—Antonio Y. Vazquez-Arroyo—Ramona Vasudevan—Miguel Vatter—Marina Vishmidt—Lisa Vogel—Victor Wallis—Jeffery R. Webber—Evan Calder Williams—Craig Willse—Richard Wolff—Chris Wright—Erik Olin Wright—Rafi Youatt—Arya Zahedi

NEW YORK CITY MAY 6–8, 2011
THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
 REGISTER AT **HMNY.ORG**

ARE YOU READY TO WORK FOR CHANGE?

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE: LABOR STUDIES

- Examine the critical issues facing workers and their organizations in today's economy
- Classes taught by a distinguished faculty of scholars, practitioners and social activists
- Pursue meaningful work in the fields of labor rights, government service, non-profits, and public policy

For more information:
www.sps.cuny.edu/murphy
 or call 212.642.2050



School of Professional Studies
 The Murphy Institute

Mission and Social Justice of The Riverside Church,

THE BRECHT FORUM

and Critical Resistance

Present

Conversations Uptown:

**THE WORLD
WE WANT IS
THE WORLD
WE NEED**

Featuring

ANGELA Y. DAVIS
RUTHIE GILMORE
VIJAY PRASHAD

Moderator:

LAURA FLANDERS,
GRIT TV

MAY 20
7pm

The Riverside Church

490 Riverside Drive
(Between 120 and 122 Streets)

TICKETS: \$20/\$30/\$50/\$100

**\$100 and up for Special
Reception with Angela Davis**

FOR TICKETS: brechtforum.org

FOR MORE INFO: 212-242-4201

April 21

6:30 PM

**Why Nature
Needs Rights**

featuring
**VANDANA
SHIVA**

CUNY GRADUATE CENTER
365 FIFTH AVENUE

April 15

7:30 PM

**The Next
American
Revolution**

featuring
**GRACE LEE
BOGGS**

BRECHT FORUM, 451 WEST STREET